
Shadows we are and
Like shadows depart.

PR
4872
I2
1891a

CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY



BOUGHT WITH THE INCOME
OF THE SAGE ENDOWMENT
FUND GIVEN IN 1891 BY
HENRY WILLIAMS SAGE

Date Due

APR 20 1954 H S

APR 3 1956 D O

CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

3 1924 064 981 016



The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924064981016

LANDOR'S

IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS



W. S. Landor.

IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS BY WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR WITH BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTES BY CHARLES G. CRUMP

IN SIX VOLUMES



THIRD VOLUME

LONDON: PRINTED FOR J. M. DENT & CO.,
AND PUBLISHED BY THEM AT 29 AND 30
BEDFORD STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
MCMIX.

PR
4872
I2
1891a
v.3

D.801378

First Edition, 1891
Reprinted 1895, 1901, 1909



TABLE OF CONTENTS.

—:o:—

DIALOGUES OF SOVEREIGNS AND STATESMEN.

XXIII. William Penn and Lord Peterborough pp. 9-123

XXIV. Windham and Sheridan . . . 123-131

XXV. Louis XVIII. and Talleyrand . . 132-141

XXVI. Romilly and Wilberforce . . . 142-155

XXVII. Oliver Cromwell and Sir Oliver Cromwell 155-163

XXVIII. Admiral Blake and Humphrey Blake . 163-166

DIALOGUES OF LITERARY MEN.

I. Lord Brooke and Sir Philip Sidney . 169-185

II. Southey and Porson 185-214

Southey and Porson (*second conversation*) 214-259

III. Bishop Burnet and Humphrey Hardcastle 260-268

IV. The Abbé Delille and Walter Landor pp. 268-314
V. Middleton and Magliabechi . . . 314-331
VI. Milton and Andrew Marvel . . . 332-341
VII. Lord Bacon and Richard Hooker . . 341-346
VIII. Samuel Johnson and John Horne (Tooke) 346-400
Samuel Johnson and John Horne (Tooke) (*second conversation*) 400-451

Appendix A 452-456



SOVEREIGNS AND STATESMEN.

DIALOGUES OF SOVEREIGNS AND STATESMEN.

—*—

XXIII. WILLIAM PENN AND LORD PETERBOROUGH.*

Penn. Friend Mordaunt, thou hast been silent the whole course of our ride hither; and I should not even now interrupt thy cogitations, if the wood before us were not equally uncivil.

* Charles Mordaunt, son of John Lord Mordaunt, was born in 1658, succeeded to the paternal honours in 1675, and to those of his uncle, the Earl of Peterborough, in 1697.[1]

In Spence's Anecdotes [p. 128, Malone's edition], he says: "I took a trip once with Penn to his colony of Pennsylvania. The laws there are contained in a small volume, and are so extremely good that there has been no alteration wanted in any one of them. There are no lawyers; every one is to tell his own case, or some friend for him. There are four persons as judges on the bench; and, after the case has been fairly laid down on both sides, all the four draw lots, and he upon whom the lot falls decides the question." p. 155.

[[1] Landor is here more than usually wrong in his chronology. He speaks of Peterborough as a young unmarried man, whereas Mordaunt was not Earl of Peterborough till he was thirty-nine, and he married when he was twenty. If he went to America as Lord Peterborough the date of this visit must be in the year 1699. It is difficult, however, to understand how even Peterborough at that time could have managed to get to America and back. He was then taking an active part in Parliamentary life, and I am almost disposed to doubt if he could have found the time. The other possible date is 1682, but there are difficulties about that date also. It is possible that the whole story of his visit is apocryphal like a good many other facts in his life. The Conversation is one of Landor's best. The characters are well drawn. Peterborough's freakish delight in turning the conversation on to subjects likely to provoke Penn into enthusiastic indignation is as natural as Penn's piety. It is scarcely necessary to mention that Plato, Canning, and the Roman Catholic religion are discussed. The quotations from Penn's writings are taken from his select works, 1771. (Imag. Convers. v., 1829. Works i., 1846. Works iii., 1876.)]

with external Nature. At home and about ourselves we wish for propriety, as we call it: out of doors we desire to leave and to forget the idea of what is within; and there is something in the open air which renders us abhorrent from the very name of this propriety. Your argument, that old hedges are less perfect, and should therefore please us less, is very good, since pleasure comes from fitness; but surely a higher pleasure may arise and meet us in a higher region of the mind. Instead of arguing that a stout young hedge is the best to keep a calf or galloway within it, we may imagine, on seeing an ancient one, composed of its variety of plants, differing in size, form, and color, that these were collected from the unserviceable wild which they deformed, and, after over-running it for ages, were obliged by a just dispensation to protect it. We may imagine the many happy generations that have enjoyed the beautiful seasons there, under the elder and hawthorn and hickory and maple, under the hazel and dog-rose, clematis and honeysuckle, and other flowering shrubs, surpassing their knowledge and mine. It gives us also the idea, though a vague and incorrect one, of the stability and antiquity of property and possession, and of that negligence which we are fond of considering as akin to liberality. The waving and irregular line in itself is beautiful; and perhaps I like it the better, as varying from the column and platoon, and everything else connected with my profession.

Penn. Yet thou pursuest thy wicked profession with enthusiasm.

Peterborough. I pursue it, because it leads to distinction and glory.

Penn. Soldiers,[3] it is said in ancient mythology, sprang from dragons' teeth, sown by Cadmus, who introduced letters; and, when I consider to what purposes these also have latterly been applied, it would appear that they surely came from the same sack as the soldiers, and were only the rottenest of the fangs kept till the last.

Art thou not contented with the distinction of the peerage?

Peterborough. The peerage hides its little men under the robes of its greater. I do confess to you plainly, I am not contented with it: I will stand alone while I stand at all; and it is only by my profession that I can expect it.

[3 See Vol. ii., p. 320., N. 2.]

Why groan so?

Penn. Because millions groan, and millions must groan still; because Crime and Genius,[4] like the wild swans in their wintry course, accommodate one another, preceding and following by turns, and changing their line, but never losing it. In printing and writing the mark of admiration and of horror is the same: oftentimes in life, what we abhor we should admire, and what we admire, abhor. The signs are identified, the things confounded.

I do not wonder that light and trivial minds should look for honor in the army; and indeed if armies were constituted, as they were among the ancients, of citizens for the defence of citizens, then indeed, although one might lament their existence, there would be something at least to mitigate the lamentation. But when I hear one gentleman ask another, "How long have you served?" or, "How do you like the service?" and when I discover glee lighted up on both sides at the name of *servitude*, the least painful of my thoughts is a very painful one,—that names and things lose their enormity by habit.

If the wiser and better of every country were its governors, there would be few wars, few wants, few vices, few miseries; and this would certainly be the case were people well instructed, which they easily might be, in their rights and duties. These are plain and simple, easy and pleasant: men would learn them one from another by daily conversation, had they not been seized upon from the moment when they begin to speak, and had no pains been taken to amaze them with marvels, and to bend into one circle their infancy and decrepitude. Nothing can enter this enchanted circle; nor can any one straighten it, so hard is the temper it hath acquired from the dust and bellowing fires in which it sweltered, and from the cyclopean anvil on which it was turned and hammered.

Thy vanity[5] prompts and excites in thee the idlest and the foolishest of desires, namely, to be looked at and admired by the

[4 "An able bad man is an ill instrument, and to be shunned as the plague." "Reflections and Maxims," i., 257.]

[5 "We are apt to *love* praise but not to *deserve* it. But if we would deserve it, we must love virtue more than *that*. . . . . Be not fond therefore of praise; but seek virtue, that leads to it." "Reflections and Maxims," ii., 103, 104, 116.]

idle and the foolish; while, with less effort and anxiety, thou mightest be esteemed and respected by the considerate and the wise.

Peterborough. I have almost every fault a man can have, excepting vanity.

Penn. That thou hast many I do verily believe, and that thou art unaware of this lying at the bottom of them; as a feather will sink below the surface of the water when it is bemired. A sick man knoweth well enough that he is sick; but he knoweth not by what proper name to call his ailment, or whence it originated. If thou art wiser than the many, do that which thou thyself approvest, rather than what they may look for; and be assured that, when they admire thee most, thou hast done something wrong. For, if they are ignorant, as we know they are, it were superfluous and redundant to say that their judgments are incorrect. Thy own heart is the standard which thy intellect should follow, under the command of God. Vanity bears nothing: what wouldst thou from it? a public path of flinty materials, trodden on backward and forward from morning to night, and holding no particle of the dews of heaven. Thou knowest what poor, sordid creatures direct and control the counsels of those who proclaim to us aloud and confidently that they act under God, and God only.

Peterborough. And, some time ago, in the glorious reign of our late gracious king's father, if you did not give ear to them, they took it.[6]

Penn. Whence but from the vapors of the earth appears there to be, to the uninformed vision, a tremulous motion in the stars? and whence but from the cloudiness and fluctuation of their intellects do they believe themselves the primary movers of those events, which the Almighty from the beginning willeth and disposeth, and of which they are the weakest instruments, though perhaps the only ones in sight. Pardon me, Mordaunt! either a wilderness like this, or a man like thee, would be sufficient to awaken in me the most serious thoughts, and the desire of giving them utterance. Common minds and common localities have no such influence over me. Among them, not to speak is best, and not to think is happiest. One older and more experienced than

[6 *E.g.*, from Mr William Prynne.]

thyself will be surety for this: that, if thou lovest true glory, thou must trust her truth; that, like the Eurydice of the poet, she followeth him invariably who doth not turn and gaze after her; and slippeth irrecoverably from his embrace who, amid shadows and hellish sights, would seize her and enjoy her upon earth.

Peterborough. The oil runs to that part of a lamp where there is heat to use it; the animal spirits, in like manner, to the occupation that can absorb them. I could easily give you my peculiar reasons for following the military profession, if this general one appears vague and idle; but I am certain you can no more wonder at it in me, than to see a larch in the upper part of a mountain: you must acknowledge it befits the place, rather than a lilac or a weeping willow. Men[7] are little better than a row of pins, if you stick them close together; but, if you set one upright on a gate-post, the folks below stare, scratch their heads, and cry, "The squire!" or "His honor!" Set another in cap and plumes on the upper step of a portico, and he suddenly hears from beneath him an appellation[8] which you serious men refuse to any thing but God. The stars themselves are not bright by any brightness of their own. Probably they are merely dull masses, like what our horses are treading on; but from that light vapor which surrounds them, and from that vast distance at which men see them, they derive and diffuse their splendor.

Penn. Some philosopher hath said, "All's well that ends well." Pithy, but unsound. For thy words end well, but thy pins do not stick in their paper, friend Mordaunt. People who act perversely are always in readiness to defend themselves with reasons yet more distorted. When I was a youth at Oxford—

Peterborough. Ay, Oxford is the arsenal of examples. Come draw out one for me, and throw the sack down again.

Penn. There was a poacher,—and happy is it for his soul if

[7 First ed. reads: "willow. *Penn.* People who," &c. (15 lines below.)]

[8 "*Not to respect persons* was and is another of their doctrines and practices. . . . Well remembering the examples of Mordecai and Elihu; but more especially the command of their Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who forbade His followers to call men *Rabbi*, which implies *Lord* or *Master*." "The Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers," p. 765.]

he never was employed by the luxurious and wanton in quest of worse game than partridges. He was named Daniel Fogram. So ready was he to engage his services in any ill scheme or device, that one young collegian laid a wager with another on his promptitude to assist in the murder of his father. He requested, then, Daniel to meet him at dusk in the middle of a plain called Portmeadow. Daniel was there before the time, and, on the approach of his employer, sprang up from the turf on which, dewy as it was, he had been lying. The young gentleman took his hand in silence, and affected to look behind him, and even behind the man Daniel. At length said he, "Dan! I hope nobody can hear us. I have an affair," added he slowly and in a whisper, and then broke off.

"Out with it, master!" said Daniel, partly in a tone of impatience and partly of encouragement.

"My dear friend, Dan!" rejoined the youth, "I have a project which, if you will help me, will bring you five guineas."

"Any thing for your honor's service," cried promptly the courtly thief Daniel; "speak out ingenuously and boldly, my good young master!"

"I have, then, since the truth must be spoken, a father who is avaricious and rich; if I were not so much in debt, or if tradespeople would trust me any longer, I would not apply to you."

"No, on my conscience," cried Daniel, abruptly. "I have trusted half the gentlemen in Christchurch; and there are grave dons, too, in more than one college, who think they are grown again as young and spunky as undergraduates, when they can turn a round oath upon the catching of a poacher. I find no money forthcoming. My pheasants, o' my faith! are no golden ones. I am sorry, master, your five guineas are spent between us here in Portmeadow, and neither of us the better." Thus spake the man Daniel, as men report of him, whose worldly words (mind ye) are none of mine.

The youth laid his hand upon Daniel's shoulder, and with the other drew forth a purse, with many pieces in it, and said calmly, "You have misunderstood me, you see: I must be rid of him."

"Naturally enough! if the old dog tugs so hard with his

rotten teeth, and won't let go the pudding-bag though he can't get down the pudding. But, master, five guineas for a father out of the way! methinks—you say he is very rich, and indeed I have heard as much; very rich indeed—another guinea could do nobody any hurt."

"Well, Dan, you must contrive the means."

"Six guineas, sir?"

"If it must be, we will say six guineas."

"Lay him, master, in one of my eel-trunks: the eels are running just now, and there are big ones about, and many of 'em; the old gentleman will give them a dinner, though he would not give you and me one."

"True, Dan: but he must be dead first."

"That is awkward. I don't like blood; though there is always some about my jacket—and nobody can swear whose: badger's, hare's, otter's; a young pig's now and then, if he cries after me piteously on the road to take up a poor passenger without a fare."

"Seriously, Dan, you can surely have no objection to kill the old curmudgeon in good company."

"Hold, master; you must do that yourself."

"Why are you so shy, honest Dan?"

"Nay, nay, master, kill him I will not."

"But why, now?"

"Why? in the name o' God! why? the man is no father of mine."

Now, Mordaunt, thy reasons, I reckon, are about as reasonable as Daniel's. Prythee be sober-minded. Wilt thou always be laughing and hiccupping and hooting at mild and sidelong reproofs? Off again! screaming like a boarding-school girl when her bed-fellow tickleth her. Fie upon thee! fie upon thee! See there now! Hold! hold! thou makest my mare kick and caper and neigh. Hath Legion entered thee? trot, creature, slower. Comeliness! comeliness! Mordaunt! Hear me! There are unruly horses in the pasture: they will surely come up, and perhaps unseat me.

Peterborough. Friend Penn, prepare yourself to accept the Chiltern Hundreds, and to make room for one or other of 'em.

Penn. Of a truth now this is unseemly.

Peterborough. By my soul, if you had told the story to the late king, he would have given you the rest of America. Come, we are out of danger, I will be grave again.

Penn. God mend thee, madcap! Wilt thou come and live with us?

Peterborough. I confess I should be reluctant to exchange my native country for any other.

Penn. Are there many parts of England thou hast never seen?

Peterborough. Several: I was never in Yorkshire or Lancashire, never in Monmouthshire or Nottinghamshire, never in Lincolnshire or Rutland.

Penn. Hast thou at no time felt a strong desire to visit them?

Peterborough. Not I, indeed.

Penn. Yet thy earnestness to come over into America was great: so that America had attractions for thee, in its least memorable parts, powerfuller than England in those that are the most. York and Lancaster have stirring sounds about them, particularly for minds easily set in motion at the fluttering of banners. Is the whole island of Britain thy native country, or only a section of it? If all Britain is, all Ireland must be too; for both are under the same crown, though not under the same laws. Perhaps not a river nor a channel, but a religion, makes the difference: then I, among millions more of English, am not thy countryman. Consider a little, what portion or parcel of soil is our native land.

Peterborough. Just as much of it as our friends stand upon.

Penn. I would say more: I would say, just as much as supports our vanity in our shire.

Peterborough. I confess, the sort of patriotism which attaches most men to their country is neither a wiser nor a better feeling than the feeling of recluses and cats. Scourges and starvation do not cure them of their stupid love for localities. Mine is different: I like to see the desperate rides I have taken in the forest, and the places where nobody dared follow me. I like to feel and to make felt my superiority, not over tradespeople and farmers in their dull debates, but over lords and archbishops, over chancellors and kings. I would no more live where they are not, than

have a mansion-house without a stable, or a paddock without a leaping-bar.

Penn. Superiority in wealth is communicated to many and partaken by thousands, and therefore men pardon it; while superiority of rank is invidious, and the right to it is questioned in most instances. I would not for the world raise so many evil passions every time I walk in the street.

Peterborough. It would amuse me. I care not how much people hate me, nor how many, provided their hatred feed upon itself without a blow at me, or privation or hindrance. Great dogs fondle little dogs; but little dogs hate them mortally, and lift up their ears and tails and spinal hairs to make themselves as high. Some people are unhappy unless they can display their superiority; others are satisfied with a consciousness of it. The latter are incontestably the better; the former are infinitely the more numerous, and, I will venture to say, the more useful: their vanity, call it nothing else, sets in motion all the activity of less men, and nearly all of greater.

Penn. Prove this activity to be beneficial, prove it only to be neutral, and we meet almost near enough for discussion. Not quite; for vanity, which is called idle, is never inoperative: when it cannot by its position ramble far afield, it chokes the plant that nurtures it. Consciousness of superiority, kept at home and quiet, is the nurse of innocent meditations and of sound content.

Canst not thou feel and exhibit the same superiority at any distance?

Peterborough. I cannot make *them* feel it nor see it. What is it to be any thing, unless we enjoy the faculty of impressing our image at full length on the breast of others, and strongly too and deeply and (when we wish it) painfully; but mostly on those who, because their rank in court-calendars is the same or higher, imagine they are like me, equal to me, over me? I thank God that there are kings and princes: remove them, and you may leave me alone with swine and sheep.

Penn. I would not draw thee aside from bad company into worse: if indeed that may reasonably be called so, which allows thee greater room and more leisure for reflection, and which imparts to thee purer innocence and engages thee in usefuller occupa-

tions. That such is the case is evident. The poets, to whom thou often appealest for sound philosophy and right feeling, never lead shepherds into courts, but often lead the great among shepherds. If it were allowable for me to disdain or despise even the wickedest and vilest of God's creatures, in which condition a king peradventure as easily as any other may be, I think I could, without much perplexity or inquiry, find something in the multitude of his blessings quite as reasonable and proper to thank him for. With all thy contemptuousness, thou placest thy fortune and the means of thy advancement in the hands of such persons; and they may ruin thee.

Peterborough. You place your money in the hands of bankers; and they may ruin you. The difference is, your ruiner may gain a good deal by it, and may run off; mine has no such temptation, and should not run far. All titulars else must be produced by others,—a knight by a knight, a peer by a king,—while a gentleman is self-existent. Our country exhibits in every part of it what none in the world beside can do,—men at once of elegant manners, ripe and sound learning, unostentatious honor, unprofessional courage, confiding hospitality, courteous independence. If a Frenchman saw, as he might do any week in the winter, a hundred or two of our fox-hunters in velvet caps and scarlet coats, he would imagine he saw only a company of the rich and idle.

Penn. He would think rightly. Such gentlemen ought, willing or loath, to serve an apprenticeship of seven years to a rat-catcher.

Peterborough. It would be no unwise thing to teach, if not gentlemen, at least the poor, in what manner to catch and exterminate every kind of noxious animal. In our island it is not enough to have exterminated the wolves: we are liable to the censure of idleness and ill husbandry while an otter, a weasel, a rat, or a snake is upon it. Zoölogists[9] may affirm

[9 First ed. reads: "Upon it. Divines may teach us that these and other vermin were created for some use. I have such deference for divines that I never argue with them. Voracious and . . . duty Free. Rats come . . . or destruction. *Penn.* Something of tenderness and consideration is due to them by the heads of parties; to whom with the consent of Majesty they have given their name and we in compliance with so high authority, say they have *ratted*. *Peterborough.* You must allow me to join the hounds again," &c. (12 lines below.)]

that these and other vermin were created for some peculiar use. Voracious and venomous animals may be highly respectable in their own society; and whenever it is proved that their service to the community is greater than the disadvantage, I will propose in parliament to import them again duty-free.

Penn. Rats come among us with almost every vessel; and nothing is easier than to entice them to a particular spot, either for the purpose of conversation or destruction, as may seem fittest.

Peterborough. Release me from the traps, and permit me to follow the hounds again; but previously to remark that probably a third of these fox-hunters is composed of well-educated men. Joining in the amusements of others is, in our social state, the next thing to sympathy in their distresses; and even the slenderest bond that holds society together should rather be strengthened than snapped. I feel no horror at seeing the young clergyman in the field, by the side of his patron the squire and his parishioner the yeoman. Interests, falsely calculated, would keep men and classes separate, if amusements and recreations did not insensibly bring them close.[10] If conviviality (which by your leave I call a virtue) is promoted by fox-hunting, I will drink to its success, whatever word in the formulary may follow or go before it. Nations have fallen by wanting, not unanimity in the hour of danger, so much as union in the hours preceding it. Our national feelings are healthy and strong by the closeness of their intertexture. What touches one rank is felt by another: it sounds on the rim of the glass, the hall rings with it, and it is well (you will say) if the drum and the trumpet do not catch it. Feelings are more easily communicated among us than manners. Every one disdains to imitate another: a grace is a peculiarity. Yet in a ride no longer than what we have been taking, how many objects excite our interest! By how many old mansion-houses should we have passed, within which there are lodged those

[10 First ed. reads: "close. There is somewhat of squeamishness in that humanity which appoints the functionaries for the obsequies of a fox, limiting the number of them, and forbidding the use of velvet or broadcloth. If," &c.]

virtues that constitute the power, stability, and dignity of a people! We never see a flight of rooks or wood-pigeons without the certainty that in a few minutes they will alight on some grove where a brave man has been at his walk, or a wise man at his meditations. North America may one day be very rich and powerful; she cannot be otherwise: but she never will gratify the imagination as Europe does. Her history will interest her inhabitants; but there never will be another page in it so interesting as that which you yourself have left open for unadorned and simple narrative. The poet, the painter, the statuary, will awaken no enthusiasm in it; not a ballad can be written on a *bale of goods:* and not only no artist, but no gentleman, is it likely that America will produce in many generations.

Penn. She does not feel the need of them: she can do without 'em.

Peterborough. Those who have corn may not care for roses; and those who have dog-roses may not care for double ones. I have a buttonhole that wants a posy.

Penn. I do not conceal from thee my opinion of thy abilities, which probably is not a more favorable one than thy own; since, however the vices that accompany them rather than the virtues, thy ambition rather than thy honesty, thy violence rather than thy prudence, may push thee forward to the first station, it is my duty as a friend to forewarn thee that such promotion will render thee, and probably thy countrymen, less happy.

Peterborough. I will not permit any thing to produce that effect on me: the moment it begins the operation, I resign it. Happiness would overflow my heart, to see reduced to the condition of my lackeys the proudest of our priesthood and our peerage. I should only have to regret that, my condition being equal to theirs, I could not so much enjoy their humiliation, as if my family and my connections were inferior. When I discover men of high birth condescending to perform the petty tricks of party for the sake of obtaining a favor at court, I wish it were possible, by the usages of our country and the feelings of Englishmen, to elevate to the rank of prime minister[11] some wrangling barrister, some impudent buffoon, some lampooner from

[11] That is to say, Canning.]

the cockpit, some zany from the theatre, that their backs might serve for his footstool.

Penn. Was there ever in a Christian land a wish more irrational or more impious!

Peterborough. The very kind of wish that we oftenest see accomplished.

Penn. Never wilt thou see this.

Peterborough. Be not over certain.

Penn. Charles, whose pleasures were low and vulgar, whose parliaments were corrupt and traitorous, chose ministers of some authority. The mob itself, that is amused by dancing dogs, is loath to be ridden by them. The hand that writeth songs on our street walls ought never to subscribe to the signature of our kings.

Peterborough. I speak of Parliament.

Penn. Thou speakest then worse still. A king wears its livery and eats its bread. Without a parliament he is but as the slough of a snake, hanging in a hedge: it retains the form and colors, but it wants the force of the creature; it waves idly in the wind, and is fit only to frighten wrens and mice.

Thy opinions are aristocratical: yet never did I behold a man who despised the body and members of the aristocracy more haughtily and scornfully than thou dost.

Peterborough. Few have had better opportunities of knowing its composition.

Penn. Those who are older must have had better.

Peterborough. Say rather, may have had more: yet omitted few, unless the lady's choice lay below the chaplain I was always select in my rivals. How many do you imagine of our nobility are not bastards, or sons or grandsons of bastards? If you believe there are a few, I will send the titheman into the enclosure, and he shall levy his proportion in spite of you.

Aristocracy is not contemptible as a system of government; in fact, it is the only one a true gentlemen can acquiesce in. Give me any thing rather than the caldron, eternally bubbling and hissing, in which the scum of the sugar-baker has nought at the bottom of it but the poison of the lawyer's tongue and the bones of the poor reptiles he hath starved.

Enough for aristocracy; now for aristocrats. Let me hold my hat before my face and look demurely while I say, and apply

the saying to myself, that, to him whose survey is from any great elevation, all men below are of an equal size. Aristocrats and democrats, kings and scullions present one form, one stature, one color, and one gait. I see but two classes of men,—those whose names are immortal, and those whose names are perishable. Of the immortal there is but one body; all in it are so high as to seem on an equality, inasmuch as immortality admits of no degree: of the perishable there are several sets and classes,—kings and chamberlains, trumpeters and heralds, take up half their time in cutting them out and sticking them on blank paper. If I by fighting or writing could throw myself forward and gain futurity, I should think myself as much superior to our sovereign lord the king, as our sovereign lord the king is to any bell-wether in his park at Windsor.

Penn. Strange that men should toil for earthly glory, when the only difference between the lowest and highest is comprised in two letters: the one *in* a thousand, and the one *of* a thousand,—an atom in the midst of atoms, take which thou wilt! For the sake of peace and quiet, I would avoid in public too nice inquiries into those dignities, as they are called, which arise fortuitously or spring from favour. Ever since the abolition of the Commonwealth, we have been deafened by exclamations of *Church and King*, and stupefied by homilies on *throne and altar*; by which latter the more pious and more intelligent mean *buttery-hatch and cellar*. They indeed declare that by "*throne*" they would signify the *will of one*, and by "*altar*" the *word of the Lord*. Now if the will of one is the degradation of millions; if the will of one is for strumpets and gamesters and ruinous expenditure in idle recreations; if the altar is the market-place whereto every man is forced to bring a tenth[12] of his corn and cattle, and must be taught by a hireling and extortioner what Jesus and his disciples and apostles, by commanding and preaching and writing, could not teach him,—then indeed must I be confirmed in my

[12 "They refuse to pay *tithes* or *maintenance* to a *National Ministry*; and that for two reasons: The one is, They believe all *compelled* maintenance, even to *gospel*-Ministers to be unlawful, because contrary to Christ's command. . . . The other reason of their refusal is, Because those ministers are not *Gospel* ones, in that the *Holy Ghost* is not their *foundation*, but *human arts and parts*." "The Rise and Progress," &c. p. 765.]

opinion, formed after many years from all I have experienced and seen, from the honester part of the reasoners I have heard, and from the wiser of the books I have perused, that, until these encumbrances and curses, this throne and altar, are removed from the earth, man never can attain, and unworthily will aspire to, the happiness and dignity of his destination.

Peterborough. I know not to what books you refer. Learned men may be mistaken in their reasonings, and are likely to be: they start with more prejudices than the unlearned, and throw them off with more difficulty. I may differ from Cicero and Sydney[13]—

Penn. Thou mayest: but, if they are wiser than thou art, might we not surmise that they think more rightly on what hath more fully occupied their thoughts?

Peterborough. That follows necessarily.

Penn. When a man on any occasion saith, "I do not think so," we might ask him, if civility allowed it, "Hast thou thought enough upon it? Or in truth hast thou thought at all?" In our case we need not run back to Cicero, we need not invoke the name of Sydney, if in the heaviness of our hearts at the violence of his separation from us it were audible on our lips; it suffices to look into our farm-yards in the morning, and at midnight to mingle with the groom-porters at the palace. The matter of religion is quite indifferent to thee, as far as the heart is concerned; and in my opinion it is here that the heart alone is in question. I am grieved to find it insisted on that the *Word of God* requires more explanation than the *Statutes at Large;* that men are appointed and paid to expound it; that we must give them money for words, and finally must take their words at their own price. We may know the very thing they do, we may know it better, we may have learned it before they learned it; there is no appeal: we must take it after their chewing, and keep it in our mouths and swallow it just as we received it out of theirs. No man whatever is salaried for teaching the laws of the land to the simple, which laws are mostly dark and intricate, although by ignorance or mis-

[13 Algernon Sidney was a close friend of Penn's. At the Guildford election in 1679, Penn worked with all his might to secure Sidney's return to parliament. See a letter from Penn to Sidney. "Sidney Papers," i., 155. Sidney's execution took place during Penn's first visit to America.]

take of them a poor creature may be hanged; yet thousands are salaried for teaching what Christ taught better, what is plain to every one, and what the divine and merciful lawgiver would certainly not hang us for misinterpreting. Indeed, He left us no power of doing so: He found a tablet on our bosoms fit for the reception of His precepts, and there is nothing in them which we can erase without violence to our conscience, nothing which we can neglect without a detriment to our interests. If none traded in the expounding of His laws, none would be called heretics, none would be burned alive, none persecuted. Toleration[14] is in itself the essence of Christianity, and the very point which the founder of it most peculiarly enjoined. It is for God to regard our motives; it is for man to regard our acts: and when an act is proved to be against the law, then, and then only, is it our business to inquire into the motive, and whether it aggravates or extenuates the offence.

Peterborough. Now answer me: would you permit any, whatsoever body of men, to act systematically against the laws?

Penn. If the laws were iniquitous, or forced upon them, there[15] are some who might.

Peterborough. What, if equitable; what, if conservative of peace?

Penn. Thou knowest my mind on this.

Peterborough. The popish priesthood must always be opposed to the civil magistrate.

Penn. In what must it, and by what necessity?

Peterborough. By its institution, by its interests and its vows. Laymen are commanded, by the statutes of every nation in Europe, to denounce a murderer or whoever is guilty of a capital crime. The popish priest, in quality of confessor, is commanded by other edicts, by edicts issued from without the country, not to denounce any such: so that, by the institutions even of Catholic States, he becomes a partaker of the crime.

Penn. There are contradictory laws that protect them.

[14] See "The great Case of Liberty of Conscience once more briefly debated and defended," esp. chap ii., "The next great evil which attends external force in matters of faith and worship is no less than the overthrow of the whole Christian religion." p. 188.]

[15] From "there" to "might" added in 2nd ed.]

Peterborough. Surely that country cannot be well governed, which has one body of laws for one body of men, another for another; which says, "This crime shall make those amends," and yet allows a priest or friar, a thousand miles off, to whisper by proxy in another's ear, "If you hear of it in confession, oblige the criminal to eat a pound of stale sprats and a bundle of stiff radishes; and, when you three divine agents have touched his entrails, take out your whittle and cut the halter." Nevertheless the papists have a strong argument in favour of their religion, disobedient as it is to the command of Jesus Christ, in rising up against the civil magistrate [16] and claiming a superiority of power.

Penn. What argument?

Peterborough. Its duration.

Penn. I never knew any thing good remain so long: and other paganisms may boast the same advantage as this. Whatever is equally well contrived to flatter the vices of men will exist while the vices themselves do. The little there was of learning in the world, and the much there was of craft and violence, were employed for many centuries in the construction of this vast fabric, where, as is reported of a temple in Babylon, every comer was invited to the mysteries of prostitution. But in Babylon we do not read that people were slain for abstaining therefrom, or for preferring fresh water to salt, and cleanliness to perfumes.

Peterborough. [17] Perhaps the greatest harm of the religion does not consist in the domination, in the fallacy, in the fraud, in the cruelty it exercises, but in rendering man selfish and ungrateful. The worst ingratitude lies not in the ossified heart of him who commits it; but we find it in the effect it produces on him against whom it is committed. As water containing stony particles encrusts with them the ferns and mosses it drops on, so the human breast hardens under ingratitude in proportion to its open-

[16 "As to that part of their confession, which may relate to their . . . paying subjection to the civil Magistrate of what religion so ever, and much more to those under whom they live: I purposely overlooked it, because it is well known that they have been so far from yielding obedience to the magistrates of any religion that they have not stuck to assassinate those of their own." "A Seasonable Caveat against Popery," p. 214.]

[17 From "*Peterborough*" to "humanity" (65 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

ness, its softness, and its aptitude to receive impressions. Envy and revenge and lust and tyranny befall the ill-disposed in common with the better; but ingratitude befalls the better only, and curdles the sweetest drop in the gentlest heart. Alms-giving, that is, the giving of money to the idle hangers-on of popery, is among the private duties she inculcates, we know for what ends: let us consider with what arguments and incentives. She assures the alms-giver that he will be richly repaid, and indeed that he can nowhere else find such interest for his money. When he hath given it, he not only is quit of old sins in an exact ratio to the sum deposited, but he may run up a fresh account, and always stand on the creditor side. And here I come to the point of gratitude, at the mention of which you looked on me interrogatively. The ragged receiver knows the motive, counts the coin, thanks the Virgin, rubs his shoulder against the angle of some pedestal, or the fret-work of some shrine, consults his confessor what number is most lucky in the lottery, tries his fortune, loses, blasphemes, crosses his bosom, and returns to Mass.

Penn. Poor, benighted soul! The old serpent putteth out his tongue to belime and catch thee.

Peterborough. Whoever has given the value of a few shillings carries back with him a ticket for Paradise, delivered at the counter, and the promise of recommendation to the servants of a garden where every bush is hung with coronals, and every alley rings with hallelujahs; but no signification that he might possibly have been actuated by compassion, by a spirit of benevolence, or by a sense of duty. It would be thought un-Christian and ungentlemanly to make inquiries into the causes of a poor man's offerings: you have no business with sympathy, none with expostulation, none with admonition, none with advice; you must give because you are commanded by the church; you must abstain from interference because the Church has already appointed to that office. Open your purse to the idle, and you may kiss the first woman you fancy, and stab the first man that interrupts you.

Penn. Wilt thou not stay thee, Mordaunt? What slough art thou sinking into?

Peterborough. I ought to have qualified the expression, by adding so as not to give scandal, but sagely and discreetly. Well

may you groan, friend Penn, if ever you dreamed that a religion like this could be eradicated. It needs not the word of God to assure us of its perpetuity; it needs but the vices of man: in other words, man's nature. Here couches the serpent that hath swallowed up all the rest; here stands the Temple, with its spacious dome and innumerable pinnacles, where Crime, shaking off Despondency, sits side by side with Virtue.

Penn. Where nothing is divine but mystery, and nothing is damnable but doubt. Nevertheless, the sun of righteousness shall arise—

Peterborough. To show the vapor, not to scatter it. Wisdom and Folly, Patience and Violence, have alike and equally lent a hand to this resplendent and indestructible pantheon.

Penn. Have Justice and Truth ever ordered it? Hath Religion, through the clouds of incense that are wafted under her, ever seen there or sought Humanity? Nowhere in turning over the leaves of the New Testament do I find the ordinance of cutting and searing in conversions: which therefore I must attribute to some holy father, whose notion of bringing up his children makes me wish he had fewer; or to some pastor who would rather superintend the gelding of his flock than the washing.

Peterborough. Your popish friends[18] in England will be very angry at you, if they ever hear you speak in this manner

Penn. They are the persons who ought to thank me, if any ought. I do not cry at the portcullis of a castle that a fox is under it: I cry at the cottage-door that I saw him steal into the hen-roost. Men hate us worse for trying to set them right than for trying to set them wrong, and have no more fondness for plain truths than for plain clothes. The popish priest hath grounds for disliking me: the popish gentleman hath no better reason for it than for disliking the man who has liberated him from a madhouse, has cured him of a malady caught by

[18 Penn was often declared by his enemies to be not only a Papist but a Jesuit in disguise. Even Bishop Tillotson, who knew him, was not very sure that this charge was untrue; see a curious correspondence, given in full at p. xxvi. of the Life prefixed to the edition quoted. Moreover, Penn in his endeavours to obtain toleration for the Quakers, had drawn into such close association with James II., that his reputation somewhat suffered.]

seeing others in it, has allowed him to order his own dinner, has kept his daughters from the defilement of foul questions and suggestions, and his wife's tongue from betraying the secrets of the family. These are only a few of the benefits I should confer on him, if he would be warned by me against that worst of falsehood and impiety, which persuades him that any mortal can stand between God and himself, or aid him in his salvation by other means than good counsel. He may swallow a goatskin of the richest *tinta de Rota* through the channel of his teacher, and his forehead may be smeared with Provence oil till it shine like a brazen warming-pan: 'twill be in vain.

Peterborough. Really, to speak my mind, a religion to be sound and wholesome must be home-brewed. In running across the way with it, you lose almost all but the froth. To force men into public houses of worship is as unjust and unreasonable as to force them into public houses of carousal. If you will insist upon it, the least you can do is to pay the reckoning.

Penn. This varieth from thy former fantasies.

Peterborough. It is my custom to say and do whatever occurs to me at the moment. I may be called inconsistent for it, but I cannot be called unfair.

Penn. Fairness and consistency are not indeed always the same. Nothing [19] is more consistent with an honest character than to acknowledge a corrected inconsistency.

Peterborough. If I give several sets of opinions while another gives one opinion only, I give what may be received and what may be rejected, which he does not: and the choice between two things is often as good as either.

Penn. And the escape from both of them is often as good as the choice.

Peterborough. In any set speech, in addressing the parliament or the soldiers, you never will find me contradictory or wavering; whereas among my friends I throw out what comes uppermost, and find a pleasure not only in my versatility, but in the watchfulness it excites among those who purchase from me, at an easy price, the titles of weariness and acuteness. Nothing is so agreeable both to children and men as to let them catch you tripping, and particularly if you are strong and usually walk up-

[19] From "Nothing" to "inconsistency" (2 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

right and with stateliness: and to connive at them is the most economical of pleasures.

Penn. It may hinder thy rise in the State; which would fret thee.

Peterborough. What man ever rose in it by his intellects, until he had perverted or contracted or covered them? The wide and abundant and impetuous stream bears pleasure and wonder on its bosom: wealth rises from the narrow and factitious. What is that to me? Let us spur on.

You have already proved that what we call patriotism is very different from what rhetoricians and orators represent it. A man's own glory rests well upon the glory of his country; but how few can claim any for their own! Great generals, great writers,—have we in existence or on record half a dozen of either? We are apt, I know not with what reason, to ridicule the French for their proneness to servitude and their adulation to princes: yet is there another man in the world so proud of his country as a Frenchman is of France? We consider no part of God's creation so cringing, so insatiable, so ungrateful, as the Scotch: nevertheless, we see them hang together by the claws like bats; and they bite and scratch you to the bone if you attempt to put an Englishman in the midst of them. Although they tell you they are the most loyal of mankind, yet they are ready at any time to sell their king and abjure their principles, and will haggle less with you about the price of them than about a bale of linen, or a barrel of haddock.

Penn. How is this? We never gained so much by Charles as we paid for him.

Peterborough. That bargain was driven hard with us: but if *we* could make little of him, what could *they* do?

A story comes into my mind, which I heard at Portsmouth just before I left England. It exhibits no unfavourable specimen of a Scot: and it proves to us that there is a certain Patriotism loath to let Truth stand in her way, or Nature herself do any thing disagreeable to her. The Lord Halifax, you may have heard perhaps, is the chief patron of our poets. A Scotchman one day came before him, bowing to the earth, and holding out a piece of rumpled paper. His lordship smiled with his usual affability, thanked him, and told him that, being a

disciple of Mr Locke's, he had no occasion for such an offering so long after breakfast. "Hauld! hauld! it's poesy, it's poesy, my laird! written on the scaith of a maiden in Dundalk, and ane of very guid connaxions."

"Well, then, my dear sir, let me see it."

The rhymes are in a kind of step like that of Cataline as described by Sallust: *modo citus modo tardus incessus;* the best invention that poetry ever made: never was there one so serviceable to the memory, for you must read them several times over before you can find out whether there are any verses in them. I should not be surprised if they shortly come supported by such a powerful host of partisans, on our side of the Tweed, as to rout the united forces of Milton and Shakspeare. Listen:—

> The southern blast was so bitter cold,
> It almost sheared the sheep in our fold,
> And made the young maiden look like the old,
> Blue as baboon is, where he is bluest—
> Mind thy steps, Meggie! mind, or thou ruest.

"How!" cried Lord Halifax, "can Scotchmen then come so near the English border in their phraseology?" Nevertheless he suspected a mistake, and soon apprehended it. "The southern blast! you must mean the northern."

"Faith and troth! and I did mean the northern, and did e'en write it, my laird! But I thought i' my conscience it ill beseemed me to leave an immortal reflaxion on my ain maither country."

Halifax gave him a guinea, ordered his groom to bring him a sack of oats from the stable, and told him at parting he ought to be made a doctor of laws for his poetry, and a knight-banneret for his patriotism. The Scotchman looked at his guinea, and said, in the despondency of ambition, "'Twou'd tak anither to bring't aboot."

Penn. Yet perhaps this very man, so zealous for the honor of his country that he would lie for her all day long, would be heartily glad to abandon her, might he thereby be made an officer of excise in Muscovy or Poland. By my removal from England to America, I do not think I any more change my country than my father did when he left Bristol for London. We relinquish her when we relinquish her purer habits, her juster laws, her

wiser conversations; not when we abandon the dissidence and dishonesty of her parties, her political craft, her theological intolerance. That is properly the land of our fathers in which we may venerate the image of their virtues; in which we may follow their steps, and leave our own not unworthy to be followed. We want animation, ye tell us; we want liberality. O Mordaunt! in the eyes of men those want every thing who want imposture. How many are there in high places who cry aloud to clear the way for the conscience!—who shout, "Give the poor creatures corn, give the poor creatures liberty;" yet who blink their eyes upon Christian blood flowing forth under the sword of persecution! Cromwell, at whose frown their rotten hearts would have melted away, is now a subject of derision to them. He stretched out his hand over the Alps, and cried, "Defend thy brother! preserve the creature that God made! loose the bondman that Christ redeemed!" Can I think it the most rational of happiness, the most obligatory of duties, to reside in a country at the head of whose councils are the silent associates of thieves and murderers? Doubtless I must lose sight of them in it; I must cherish it, I must love it, because it is the country where I broke my head seven years ago by forcing my horse over a gate! Is it any thing for such as thou art, or (I would say it with humility) for such as I am, to be greater in soul and intellect than a king, or chancellor, or archbishop? Have we the same temptation as they have, for violence, disingenuousness, and falsehood? Let us praise God that we have not, and let us keep where we never may catch it.

Peterborough. Then let us think of the country, the only true comforter; or, if you dispute this point, the only general one. Could not you have left standing in these meadows a few of the shadier and larger trees?[20] It appears to me, friend Penn, that you are like a father who strips two or three of his infants stark-naked, and encourages his elder son to wear several great-coats.

Penn. Why, perhaps it might have been as well to leave here and there a tree, for the sake of the cattle.

[20 Dr Stoughton in his "Life of Penn," p. 296, states that on his second visit to Pennsylvania, Penn expressed regret at the felling of trees. No reference is given for this.]

Peterborough. And for the sake of ornament.

Penn. I cannot see any great ornament in trees, until the carpenter hath had them under his hand. They are dull in summer and ragged in winter, the very best of them, trim them and contrive them as you will. The ornament of a country is the sight of creatures enjoying their existence.

Peterborough. And yet you would not let people dance.

Penn. I would not call them together for that purpose: but when countryfolks have done the business of the day, I might not reprove them for an innocent relaxation.

Peterborough. Really, I fancied that even the sound of a fiddle was an abomination to you!

Penn. I was never given to capering; but there is something in a violin, if played discreetly, that appeareth to make hot weather cool, and cold weather warm and temperate: not however when its chords have young maidens tied invisibly to the end of them, jerking them up and down in a strange fashion before one's eyes, and, unless one taketh due caution, wafting their hair upon one's face and bosom, and their very breath too between one's lips, if peradventure one omitteth to shut them bitterly and hold tight.

Peterborough. Egad, friend William, I have talked with dancing masters in my day, who knew less about their business than you do.

Penn. If they knew but half of it, they would change it for a better. They do not see where it finishes.

Peterborough. Impudent dogs, they would see that too, if they could!

Penn. We must accommodate things and practices to their country. Hot-beds do not want stoves, and stoves do not want furnaces, and furnaces do not want blow-pipes. In cities the youth has pastime enough, without incentives to frowardness and lust; but the laborer of the fields may perhaps dance in the evening with the young woman he has worked with in the noon, and do it irreproachably. His truly is a kind of labor that will not whet his appetite for wanton things; and the motion of the limbs, being different from that wherein they had been exercised many hours, would rather tend to refresh than to weary him. Among the idle, by the presence of what is

pleasant to the senses, thoughts swell into wishes, and wishes ripen into deeds.

Peterborough. Why should not they?

Penn. Because our destination is higher, if we consent to it; and because we can do good in as little time and with as little trouble as we can do evil. As[21] all parts of the world are equally nigh to the heavens, so by their primary position are all men equally nigh to God; but many rational creatures, as we call them, do by their vices draw back from the Creator, while brute matter stands consistently where he placed it.

Peterborough. I would rather hear a sermon[22] from you than from anybody else: you pluck me for the sake of cooling and cleansing me; the old women who have laid hands on me from the pulpit plucked me only to get something by my feathers.

Penn. Nobody can lie easily upon such feathers as thine; and the housewife doth well who singes them all round. The powers bestowed on thee by thy Maker are perverted by thy passions, and, instead of serving thee, bear against thee; as guns on shipboard, loosened by foul weather, run ruinously back against those who were appointed to direct them. The trees, the blades of grass, the weakest herbs, assume by degrees the consistency they ought to have, and grow to the uttermost height the climate and soil allow to them: we alone droop when our strength should be at its full; and the strongest man in England sees no reason why we should not. Mordaunt, it would afflict thee to blush at thee: against that fire thou couldst not stand; beware then.

Many in every age have been the hypocrites of Virtue: ours is the only one, I imagine, that ever saw the hypocrites of Vice. Persons of your condition found a difficulty in becoming profligate to their heart's content. It was a point of conscience with them (when every other point of it was blunted or broken) to seem worse than they really were, and to make their intimates worse, if possible, than themselves. This in great measure was done from a spirit of obstinacy and contradiction; for, although on the

[21] From "As" to "direct them" (16 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

[22] One morning I went to hear Penn preach, for "'tis my way to be civil to all religions." Peterborough in "Spence's Anecdotes," p. 171.]

opposite side there were numbers of strict and holy men, there were certainly more of those who were only so in appearance. Thousands were, heart and soul, devoted to the cause of liberty; tens of thousands pretended a love of it, merely to obtain a portion of fines and confiscations. Would you wish to have before you any objects more odious?

Peterborough. The wish would be fruitless.

Penn. And yet there were those who tried whether they could not become so: and as they had opposed real licentiousness to false religion, so they carried what they called loyalty to such a degree of subserviency as would disgrace a troop of Asiatic slaves; and adored the most reprehensible of kings, not only in the language but with the rites of their church-worship, drinking to his health in the same posture as when they celebrate the most awful event in the ministry of their Redeemer, and devoting their lives to him with the same formality.

Peterborough. And the same faith.

Every man would rather eat a good dinner than a bad one; and when it is easier to get it by kneeling and drinking than by laboring and thirsting, I can not call them fools for it.

Penn. Verily I did not designate them by that name, although some of them have seen reason to bestow it on themselves.

Peterborough. Poverty gives a man of family great privileges: I do not make use of mine, and care little about those who have stolen a march of me, and rest in oblivion. Yet I am poor enough for any pretensions, and am likely to remain so in spite of contingencies; for I have rather a large family of vices, and am resolved, as becomes a good parent, to cherish and maintain them.

Penn. Inconsiderate young man! Know, for thy comfort and encouragement, it is less easy in youth to extinguish vices than to convert them into virtues. Afterward we lose the power of doing either, and fancy that to whine and promise serves as well. Fit thyself to become the head and ornament of a family: love some one.

Peterborough. Easy enough, that!

Penn. Perhaps not so easy as at first it appeareth to thee. To desire is not to love; the passions are moderated by tenderness.

Peterborough. Faith! I am afraid they are among us men. Love, like canine madness, may be fairly stifled in a feather-bed, with proper assistance. Your advice reminds me of a recitative, I know not in what opera:—

> Amare una, e dall' una esser amato,
> E'il sommo ben che possa l'uom godere;
> Due mi amano; amo tré: sono infelice.

Penn. Which being Englished, what may be the import?
Peterborough.

> To love one, and to be beloved by one,
> Is the greatest good a mortal can enjoy:
> Two love me; I love three: I am unhappy.

Penn. And he deserved it, whoever he was: for truth had opened his eyes, and he would not see. The sentiment is worthy of a pagan in red boots.

Peterborough. An idle friend [23] of mine spent an autumn and winter in Italy. Soon after his arrival in that country, he took a residence at the Lake of Como, and was particularly fond of a shady walk beside the rivulet which runs near the city. Here he saw in the old hedge of a little wood, about a mile from the Milan gate, a very beautiful green lizard. The animal looked at him as steadfastly as he looked at the animal; and, it being the first he had ever seen of that large kind, he continued to admire it for almost half an hour. On the morrow, at the same time of day, he repeated his visit to the place, and found in a few minutes the same inhabitant: and their interview was again the same. Curiosity led him a third time to the spot, but somewhat later; and he really felt a disappointment at not finding his lizard. He sat down and began to read, and after a time was about to change his posture (for the short grass hardly covered the gravel, and he had not under him such a cushion as you have), when the lizard's eyes met his, between him and the bank. It stopped and gazed at him, and then walked slowly into the hedge, and gazed again from the very place in which it was first discovered. Confidence was now established between the parties. One day my friend was tempted to take his lizard home with him, and tried to catch

[23] Landor himself may have been the hero of this story; he lived for some time at Como.]

it. The creature, equally swift and quicksighted, sprang away; looked once more at him from its first position, and was never seen afterward. This is the recital of my friend; a friend as foolish as any I have: but I suspect his folly will save me from a greater; and, if idleness should attract me to the side of marriage, I shall think of him and his lizard. He was not contented with all the pleasure it ever could have given him; he must forsooth catch it and keep it: had he succeeded, he would soon have been as tired of the creature as the creature would have been of him. Marriage is the first step to repentance: and there are not many to climb.

Penn.[24] I have better hopes of thee than thou appearest to entertain of thyself. A conversion was produced in my own family through means extremely slight, and (if there be any such) upon a fortuitous occasion. My good father had once a waiting-man, whom, among other services, he employed in the pouring out of wine at the sideboard from black bottles into white, of which white there being some lack, he bade the man buy two more. The man went forthwith, and bought them; but ere dinner-time they were broken. Whereupon my father said to him, "Hast thou broken the two bottles?"

"Yea," said he.

"How? thou fool!" cried my father; for he was quick and choleric.

His waiting-man then answered, and said, "I brake them by striking one against the other, to try if they were good for any thing."

The patience of my beloved parent did not hold out against this, and, rising from his seat, he would have smitten the waiting-man; but I arose also, and caught him by the sleeve, and said to him: "Father! thou art angered. I would speak to thee with all dutifulness, as becometh a young man and thy son. Bethink thee now, my good father, if thou, being a man of war, hast not done to men what thy servant hath done to bottles; if thou hast not been fain to try, whether, in thy estimation, being a man of war, they were good for any thing, and by the same experiment and proof; namely, by making one of them strike the other.

[24 In the 1st ed. Penn here narrates a gross anecdote; Landor omitted it in the 2nd ed. and it is not reprinted here.]

Pardon then this thy servant, for that he hath confessed he did it, when it may be that such confession is not yet made by thee, my honored parent, nor deemed requisite."

Peterborough. And what said the old admiral to this?

Penn. I need not tell thee; since it aideth in nothing my discourse.

Peterborough. But do tell me.

Penn. I will, then, inasmuch as it evinceth his compliancy of temper.

"Son William," said he, "for one sally of such good sense and good nature, I could bear thy sanctification and grimaces seven years. Give me thy hand, my lad; we are friends again for life."

Now I had angered him, by hoping and resolving to live in future more regularly and religiously than we had been accustomed to do among his nautical companions.

Peterborough. If joy, which is much less ingenious, much less argumentative, than grief, had allowed him a few moments of reflection, he might have told you that men are well tried whether they are *good for any thing*, by this process. For not only do they prove their courage,—without which, as the world is constituted, there is neither peace nor equity, the two best things of good things, as you above all people will admit,—but they promote one another's self-esteem, and superadd the delicacy of good manners to those higher and purer attributes of sound morality.

Another thing, my friend, or rather, if you will bear it, two, I must object against your system. You prohibit not dancing only, but singing and drawing. As you will perhaps make the better defence for yourself on singing, I shall speak first upon drawing, and then attack you mainly.

One would imagine that so contemplative a race of people as you are would cultivate an art of which the early shoots require shade and seclusion, and the first efforts are made in privacy. Others are *chaperons* to society and dissipation. In dancing, I concede to you, the figure of the dance is the last figure that is thought of; and, in music, there never was a young person of either sex who, in the softest parts, did not sigh a note higher than the flute. Drawing has no such inconvenience or aberration.

This creative faculty is silent and meditative; it leads to a temperate love of Nature, to a selection of what is beautiful, and to a habit of what is correct.

In poetry, the most tender and the least tender emotions are excited. He who draws tears from me would draw his sword against me, if I tried as a poet to draw any tears from him: so fixedly is jealousy the associate of poetry. And when a woman takes up the art, as some have done among us, I would whisper in her ear, if I dared, that there never was a Sappho who would not plunge over-head for a Phaon.

Drawing here, too, is widely different. If it raises any aspirations after Fame, they are solitary and sober, and after Fame in her calmest and most quiescent hour.

Penn. Friend, we can do without both Fame and her aspirations; and what we *can* do without we *should*, or we must forfeit the name of temperate men.

Peterborough. Surrender then to me this province of Pennsylvania.

Penn. Nay, nay! I do not play at forfeits with thee · and beside, the gift would harm thee. My prudence is greater (discreetly be it spoken) than thine.

Peterborough. Faith is it!

Penn. And thou wouldst never erect such an asylum for peace and industry, as, by the blessing of God, I hope to erect herein for future generations.

Peterborough. I must attack you then on the side of singing, and argue upon it as a moralist might do.

Penn. Then verily, friend Mordaunt, thou wilt display much originality: I yearn to behold thee in that character.

Peterborough. Have you never heard soldiers and apprentices sing lewd songs?

Penn. Why, songs under that description and from those quarters have reached mine ear: and, if report speak truly, the breath of such hath tarnished the nearest gold lace on each side o them.

Peterborough. If patriotic or tender ones had been written well among us, and set to good music, they would have gained access to those persons who, for want of them, amuse their idleness and indulge their fancies with ribaldry. Nay, had they been

awakened early by them, such idleness and such fancies never would have existed: for music of this nature is a strengthener both of the mind and of the heart. I am persuaded that even the highest national character might be raised still higher by inspiring boys with a timely love of it, and by supplying them with lofty and generous sentiments in graceful and well composed songs.[25] The Lacedemonians were the rudest people in Greece: I doubt whether the admirable order that subsisted long among them, as citizens and as soldiers, is more owing to the laws of Lycurgus than to the elegies of Tyrtæus. The Athenians were the softest and most effeminate: yet they dashed down tyranny and strode over valor, singing the praises of Harmodius and Aristogiton.

Penn. We have no tyranny to dash down, and no valor to stride over; our voice is, "God is among us: he commands us peace." Thy observations, as applicable to the turbid state wherein it is (as thou fanciest) the interest of such as thou art to keep thy country, are not incorrect.

Peterborough. This avowal is very liberal: keep up with it n practice. Why cannot you take men as you find them? You might make a great deal of them, and spare yourselves the trouble of turning them inside-out. You resemble the Puritans too much for me.

Penn. Are we cruel, then, and intolerant, and arrogant? Are we without mercy, without forbearance, without patience? Do we look for God everywhere but where he is to be found; and are we desirous of setting up before him such another figure as ourselves?

Peterborough. No, certainly not, at present: but, if religions were not sideling in their infancy and retrograde in their maturity, one might fear it. Calmness and quietude are your darlings.

Penn. They are the things that men want most.

Peterborough. You undervalue, or rather you despise and contemn, what exalts us in the arts and sciences, and hence inhibit the growth and tendency of intellect; which surely, to speak in your own manner, God bestowed upon us for our improvement. What is worse, you allow no compromise between Vice and

[25 It is curious to discover in Landor an opinion so plainly due to his studies in Plato. See Laws, ii., 660, where Plato quotes Tyrtæus; also Republic, iii., 398.]

Virtue: by which system, if universal, men finding the impracticability of perfection, and experiencing the loss of esteem for not bringing what you exact from them, would relapse without a struggle or an effort from the eminence they had obtained. In the large heart, the habitation of generosity and beneficence, I would leave a cell or two vacant for less worthy guests, and pass without peeping in.

Penn. But prythee shut the door, if thou findest it wide open, with the intruders at their tricks!

Peterborough. It is the privilege of man to do irrational things.

Penn. Do you people who talk of privileges, and (such is the phrase) enjoy them, exert them every day?

Peterborough. Only this one.

Penn. Mordaunt! Mordaunt! would that thy confession, frank and honest as it is, were made in another tone and with another feeling, and to a holier than I am, or than man can be!

Peterborough. You have given me leave to speak plainly and unreservedly with you, upon every question and every objection.

Penn. Else neither were I thy friend nor wert thou mine.

Peterborough. I will venture then to declare that in the opinion of the world, enemies as you profess yourselves to pride, you are no less proud than other men, though differently.

Penn. There are some among us, I wish I were confident of being one, who have twisted back and cut off many rank branches from this most poisonous plant, the roots whereof twine about the heart until they suck out the best juices, and until its wind-catching and ever-fluttering foliage overshadows and starves the brain. Self-complacency is often mistaken for pride, and stands not far from it in certain places. The consciousness of having mastered some prepotence of passion, or having rectified some obliquity of disposition, may leave the expression of disdain for the evil subdued not unmingled with gladness, perhaps too triumphant, in the subduer. I will never animadvert on thee, friend Mordaunt, at seeing a grand illumination in thy countenance after such a victory.

Peterborough. In this warfare you are among the few great captains.

Penn. Never say it. Hear the wise one: "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick;" and mine is sick indeed, for I myself have deferred the hope I raised and cherished. Perverse as we are, we sigh for happiness; we know where to find it, and we will not go for it one step. Would we increase it, we must do with it as we do with money: we must put it out. Whatever of it we place in the hands of another, let him be improvident, let him be thankless, is sure to return to us, and without delay: whatever we keep to ourselves lies dead the moment we have thus settled it, and cannot be lifted from the chest. I have begun to do good late, and can hope, alas! now to do but little.

Peterborough. A truce with sighing, friend Penn; for that is a thing in which I never can join with you, unless I find you in debt, or with bad wine before you: these being two evils beyond my mending, and growing no better for waiting.

You have turned me aside from the conversation I would have holden with you about pride.

Penn. Dost thou find any growing in this wilderness; or dost thou fancy I have chosen a fit spot for the cultivation of it?

Peterborough. No, no; but tell me whether you do not believe there are some kinds of it useful and beneficial to society?

Penn. I do not.

Peterborough. I would by no means advert to that which arises from antiquity of family, unless I were fully confident of surpassing one day, in services to my country, the foremost of my ancestors.

Penn. In regard to antiquity of family, the hedgehog and sloth fairly beat the best of us, by a good day's run.

Peterborough. So says Moses.

Penn. And, friend, art thou wiser than he?

Peterborough. I do not speak of the creature man; I do not speak of our commoners or peers. The only claim to distinction in the generality of the better is, that their ancestors have lived upon the same spot for several ages: so have their groves and avenues; so have their pigs and poultry. Among us of the peerage, there are only ten or eleven whose best forefather rendered any remarkable service to his country, or distinguished his name by valor or by genius. Supposing a peer or gentleman,

descended not from one who crouched or courtesied to a frivolous fantastic Scotch schoolman, or those lying varlets his son and grandsons; but from one who clinked his mail in close array with a Plantagenet's, or, what is more, bade him respect his equals and reverence the laws,—shall not that man look back with pride upon the glorious shade gone past, and shall not he become the better for the retrospect?

Penn. With veneration he may indeed look back, but not with pride, which ought to be humbled to the dust before such an apparition. Pride it would be, and folly too in the extreme, if he preferred the dead man who had once done these things, to the living one who does the same at the same hazard.

Peterborough. The rarity of those who acted and thought generously in times of ignorance and violence renders a single one such equal in value to some thousands of the foremost who act and think so now.

Penn. It[26] is easy to look down on others; to look down on ourselves is the difficulty. Of all pride however, and all folly, the grossest is where a man who possesses no merit in himself shall pretend to an equality with one who does possess it; and shall found this pretension on no better plea or title than that, although he hath it not, his grandfather had. I would use no violence or coercion with any rational creature; but, rather than such a bestiality in a human form should run about the streets uncured, I would shout like a stripling for the farrier at his furnace, and unthong the drenching-horn from my stable-door.

Peterborough. After all you have said, I am but the more confirmed in the sentence of a poet, whose name I have forgotten, that Pride is

> Mother of Virtues to the virtuous man,
> And only hateful with her arm round Vice.

Penn. Thou mistakest another for her; she is verily an unsober jade, who in her gravest humor will lead thee into quarrels, and in her gayest will pick thy pocket. Turn[27] away from this foul obscure vision, and discourse again about the land before us, which may constitute hereafter many States, prosperous and independent.

[26] From "It" to "difficulty" (2 lines) added in 3rd ed.]
[27] From "Turn" to "independent" (4 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

Peterborough. I have an insuperable objection to small States, because of their inability to defend themselves. If some day America should form herself into a republic, as it is evident she will from the political and theological tenets of the settlers, one portion must drop off after another, like noses and ears in such a climate, and every thing soon be rotten and at last diminutive.

Penn. Families themselves do not hold together longer than is consistent with the welfare of the members; yet, although they may not hold together, they may abstain from fighting and quarrelling. In vain wilt thou devise new forms of government, until thou hast erected something for those forms to stand upon. Until thou hast broken in the horse, do not trouble thy head about the color or quantity of the trappings; for peradventure thou mayest not sit easily on them, nor long. Small republics have usually been happier than extensive ones, while small principalities serve only as seraglios for the masters of greater, out of which to take their wives: otherwise it would be expedient for them to putty up such bug-holes.

Suppose an Italian wishes to commit a murder, and he hath no cardinal at Rome to protect him, nor any friend among the domestics of the most Christian or most Catholic majesties, whose ambassadors' houses are inviolable asylums for assassins,—he hath only to waylay his enemy in such a State as Piombino or Massa, out of which, if he catcheth a cow by the tail and she gallopeth, he shall be carried in twenty minutes.

Peterborough. This reminds me that there is prevalent through the whole of Europe a most injudicious, injurious, and iniquitous practice: the custom of protecting, I do not say murderers, for that is not universal, but fraudulent debtors and other fugitive malefactors. One would imagine that common interest and common courtesy should admit, should indicate, should dictate, the pursuit of them, even by an armed force if necessary passing the boundaries. No prince ought to be the patron or the protector of lawless men. In private life we not only refuse to receive such characters, but we dismiss from our service those who have given a slight offence to our equals. I am not so visionary as to expect that princes should be gentlemen; but, as they often have gentlemen about them, some one it may be hoped, at some time or other, will have courage and influence enough

to persuade them that such a conduct is at once dishonorable and disadvantageous.

Penn. Every[28] government should provide for every subject the means of living both honestly and at ease. We should bring out of every man and every creature as much utility as we may: now much utility will never be produced, unless we render life easy and comfortable. If all men and women would labor six hours in the twenty-four, some mentally, some corporeally, setting apart one day in the seven, all the work would be completed that is requisite for our innocent and rational desires. Dost thou believe that God beholds with pleasure any poor wretch working three-fourths of his whole lifetime, reckoned from childhood?

Peterborough. No, nor is the thing possible.

Penn. I tell thee, Mordaunt, the thing is possible, and is done.* Thou countest not the hours when thy horse is at his manger as those of his course; not the hours when our common nature casteth him down into sleep: why then treat thy fellow man more harshly? He too must sleep, whether he will or no; he too must replenish his veins with food and sustenance. These are as requisite to his labor, are in fact as much the implements and tackle of it, as the spade and plough. When Nature hath demanded so much for herself, what remaineth to the creature? Allow six hours for rest in cold climates, eight in hotter, and one in each for refreshment by food; thou wilt then find that not only three-fourths, but nearly the whole of life is hard labor. This ought not to be: and I verily do believe that God hath opened to us our new continent that it may be no longer.

Peterborough. The whole world is not in the condition you represent.

Penn. True, the whole world is not; but only that part of it which is policied and civilized: in other words, that very part which, possessing the experience of ages, ought to liberate itself

[28] From "Every" to "ease" (2 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

* The House of Commons lately passed an Act that children under *nine* years of age shall not be obliged to work longer than *twelve* hours in the day. Do not the wretches deserve to be stoned to death, who authorize the infliction of such labor on creatures so incapable of enduring it? No animal, though full-grown and vigorous, should labor twelve hours, with all the benefit of open air, refreshment more regular, cessation more frequent, change of position, and variety of motion.

from its trammels, and to enjoy the refreshing sweetness of well-ripened society.

What art thou musing upon with such complacency?

Peterborough. I know that you rise early, and I cannot see why you allow to others quite so many hours of sleep. I myself sleep only four.

Penn. I could make thee sleep six, and soundly as a Board of Inquiry in the committee-room, and quarrel with him who wakened thee, swearing (for thou dost swear now and then, friend Mordaunt —God mend thee!) that thou wert already upon thy legs, and wantedst no fool to call thee, and rubbing thine eyes meanwhile with nightcap between them and forefinger.

Peterborough. Indeed could you, friend William, and without a march up the garret-stairs, to the little snug room with a square white curtain at the window, and overlooking the poultry?

Penn. Oh, fie! thou wanton!

Peterborough. That indeed would make a man pant, and desire to rest himself, and take rest therein though he were as the young cedar, even like unto the cedar that hath not many years.

Penn. Who touched thy lips with flame, that thou speakest thus?

Peterborough. Not she, upon my honor! not that bright cynosure with the eye of steel and bosom of snowy-cloud, that the cocks crow to, and waken me.

Penn. Be discreet; and ponder not upon the hand-maiden.

Peterborough. In earnest then, do not you think that eight hours' sleep would be excessive for a laborer, in any climate!

Penn. I do not. I would divide his sleep, in some countries; four hours in the hottest part of the day, four at night. I sleep seven, and am convinced that many, and those too who do not labor, may sleep eight without ill consequences.

Peterborough. Yet those who have slept long have mostly been short-lived.

Penn. Not because they slept long, but because they ate and drank immoderately and late, and slept in consequence both long and badly. Long sleep in itself, I conceive, is far from unwholesome, though it is almost always followed by debility.

Peterborough. How can it be other than unwholesome, if followed, as you acknowledge, by debility?

Penn. This proceeds not from the relaxation caused by its continuance, but from breathing the same air the whole time, and losing that which refreshes the earth, and every thing alive, animal and vegetable, soon after sunrise. If we arose when we ought to do, we should be the better for a brief and gentle sleep in the middle of the day: a thing which very active and very studious men are improvident in neglecting. Neither love nor poetry hath imagined aught more precious than the eyes: insomuch that the poet and lover, when he hath made some idle girl believe every thing else, comes hither at last as to the highest pitch of all, telling her that she is dearer to him than they are; and, if she swallows this wafer, her faith is catholic. The eyes would remain much longer unimpaired, by dividing (I do not say equally) the hours of their employment and their repose.

Peterborough. The Society of Friends enjoys eyesight in perfection, and with the clearest title; by rejecting with other pleasures those of literature. I never have heard of one, beside yourself and Barclay,[29] who pursued any science or was occupied in any study.

Penn. The knowledge that conduces to practical good is not restricted or undervalued by us: whatever leads away from that direction seems to us reprovable and amiss.

Peterborough. My dear Penn, you are too speculative; too visionary for this world of matter and realities.

Penn. Friend, that which thou callest matter is indeed such; but that which thou callest reality is not. There is nothing so visionary as what the world esteems real; nothing so baseless, nothing so untrue.

Peterborough. Men, it appears to me, are incapable of that perfection to which you would, with whatever gentleness, bring them on.

Penn. We do not hope to conduct them further in the way than our blessed guide and master hath commanded. They are no worse generally in our day than they were in his, although the best governments in these ages are more degrading than Roman

[29] For "Barclay" 1st ed reads: "George Fox." Fox was scarcely a student.]

or Greek would suffer, until utterly subdued. It is impossible to rescue the human race from the abyss of sin and slavery, unless we can induce our brethren to look on Christianity in its purity.

Peterborough. Ah, my friend! nothing on earth has been or ever will be of long continuance, and least so purity.

Penn. Thou speakest untruly, Mordaunt! Of long continuance have been folly and wickedness: shall wisdom, then, and righteousness be transitory or illusive? Is that which is inconsistent and wrong of a nature more stable than that which is consistent and right? Is there singleness in falsehood? is there duplicity in truth? Why then shall corruption stand, and incorruption sink? Or why shall the good bend voluntarily to drink from the cup of the damned the last and bitterest of its dregs, despair? Let us raise up our heads unto the God who made us: even as He made us let us raise them up; and let us hope and believe that He will help us in our endeavours to render one another free and happy. We take man such as His hand hath formed him; we lead man whither His voice hath called. Is this visionary? is this speculative?

Peterborough. Enthusiasm will cool gradually. Within half a century, I presume to prophesy, the Society will dissolve from its very purity.

Penn. Let it continue but that period; and it will contain, in so brief a span as the half-century thou allowest to it, a greater portion of true Christianity and solid happiness than the sixteen whole ones passed over us have contained. After which, supposing that religion may have grown much cooler, habits of industry and feelings of gentleness will have sprung up widely, and have spread far beyond the enclosures of our brotherhood.

Peterborough. Nations, like individuals, interest us in their birth and early growth: every motion, however irregular, seems to us natural, graceful, an indication of vigor or intelligence. For some time afterward the sallies of frowardness and of passion are not only forgiven in them, but applauded and admired. Soon, however, what we fancied a pleasing peculiarity becomes an awkwardness and uncouthness; what was spirit is petulance; and we confess we are disappointed in our hopes and calculations. In fact, the hopes were foolish, and the calculations were traced by a clumsy finger on a moving sand.

Against our expectations and auguries, America may produce boors without the honesty, the simplicity, the frugality of boors; and merchants not only without the quiet industry and expectant patience of merchants, but with scarcely the steadiness of the elements that waft and convey their merchandise. Do not accuse me of rashness or of incivility, when I declare to you my suspicion that you, however unconsciously, tend toward this mischief. Whenever a part of society secedes from the general mass under whatever pretext, it grows distrustful, and renders others so: hence moroseness, and the resolution of indemnity by the acquisition of wealth, to gratify a secluded vanity and enforce an ungracious consequence.

Penn. The ancients were of opinion that every man hath his good and evil genius. They would have believed more wisely that every thing human hath about it, near or remotely, somewhat of good and somewhat of evil. There is truth, and perhaps more of it than can unfold itself at present, in thy observation. We will strive, by mutual admonition and encouragement, to make straight and even and pleasant, and to break off and to bend aside as many thorns as we can from the path we have chosen to pursue. One would think it requireth but little exhortation to warn men against the two mischiefs thou hast pointed out: whereupon I would ask the grossest fool and sensualist whether he doth not eat a heartier dinner and digest it better by keeping in good humor; and I would ask the most dishonest rogue that ever touched a fleece whether he gaineth not more by being trusted than by being distrusted, and whether he hath not a better chance of being trusted for honesty than for dishonesty? Teach men to calculate rightly, and thou wilt have taught them to live religiously.

Peterborough. Pious and contented as your people seem, they are not indifferent to the good things of this world; indeed none look more attentively to what we call the main chance.

Penn. Honest occupation is favorable to that piety and content which thou attributest to us.

Peterborough. Religious men, in other new sects, have generally placed their reliance more undividedly on Providence.

Penn. Providence uses earthly means. We rely on Provi-

dence for blessing us in our endeavors to benefit one another; which we would do by giving employment to the needy, and aiding the laborious.

Peterborough. Fortune has favored you above others. Industry often fails with them; with you rarely.

Penn. Allegorically speaking, as thou hast done, of Fortune, if we hope to be gainers from her wheel we must now and then drive a spoke into it ourselves; and we must take what precaution we can that it do not fire by its velocity. Industry has never failed while she has kept both eyes upon one object, nor until she has risen from her business and gone into partnership with Speculation. Afterward she hath no better right to the name of Industry than Thievery hath, or Gaming.

Peterborough. The world will turn round still. Industry is produced by Want, Wealth is produced by Industry, Idleness is produced by Wealth, Poverty is produced by Idleness. Here Poverty finds herself at the side of her sister Want. They agree to go in search of Industry before it is too late, being sure of finding her, since she may be heard of in every field and traced in every gateway: and the great year proceeds again through the same zodiac. We may calculate in like manner on the order of the political globe, which is destined in all its divisions of country to one series of risings and settings. Barbarians must have a chieftain; the chieftain must have favorites: these are jealous, and quarrel, and stand apart. Each promises what great things he will do for such as espouse his cause. A part of these benefits is granted, a part extorted. Hence the higher power by degrees is subdivided; but the principal holder of it is never quiet, until he can recover, by force or stratagem, what his interest led him to compromise, or his weakness to concede. That which is balanced can never long be stable; for a time it nods to the one side, for a time to the other; but at last it falls to that where there are the most hands to drag it down: hence Democracy. The exaltation of spirits which Democracy produces in the body politic, and the envy and hatred which every king in its vicinity bears against it, are the causes of eloquence and of war. Popular chiefs are recommended for the army by popular orators: in these chiefs the habit of command abroad is succeeded by the flagrant lust of it at home. Clamors are

raised; advantage is taken of great abuses for the entrance of greater; and from the slips of the theatre, thus thrown into confusion, comes Monarchy again in full plumage, sometimes alone and straightforward, sometimes in slower and statelier procession, through the yielding files of a bought and bowing aristocracy.

Penn. Thy wand, friend Mordaunt, hath well pointed out those monstrous signs under which the industry and felicity of mankind have regularly been blasted.

As the arrow of Paris was directed from behind the brightest and most glorious of the heathen gods, and occasioned the downfall of his native city, so hath ever that of Policy in later times from behind the fairer image of Christianity; and hath likewise caused the prostration, not of a city, not of a country, not of an empire, not of a continent, but of all God's higher creatures in every quarter of the civilized world. For, without these corruptions and abominations, can we believe that Mahometanism would have risen up, like the Simoom from the desert, and have thrown Truth upon her face, and stifled Wisdom, in their fairest regions, in their most ancient residences? Or that the Gospel would not have penetrated long ago into the farthest recesses of this half-illumined Earth? Half-illumined do I call it? Long will it be, I fear, before a few scanty rays are to fall upon a fourth or fifth of it.

This[30] we owe to Popery; to her turbulence, her insolence, her fraudulence; to her rapacity, her persecutions, her lusts; to her contempt of good faith, of equitable government, of authority both divine and human. Now every establishment of a political church is Popery: every church having a head, which head is not Christ. So long as the pure is dipped in the impure and left in it, so long as what ought to be the most simple is made the most splendid, and what belongs to the house of God is transferred to the house of Parliament, there cannot be true Christianity among the people.

The religion of Christ is peace and good-will; the religion of Christendom is war and ill-will. Popery hath set the worst examples, and hath maintained them the longest.

[30 First ed. reads: "*Peterborough.* This we owe . . . divine and human. *Penn.* Every establishment," &c.]

Peterborough. You appear to dislike the religion of Rome worse than any other modification of Christianity.

Penn. As being more remote from the simplicity of the Gospel, and as violating more of Christ's ordinances. Popery lives on the offal of men's vices.

Peterborough. Not she, indeed: she has better dishes; though these, if well dressed, are not amiss.

Penn. For shame! for shame!

Peterborough. Be generous; be just! If the pope has a couch for Vice, he has also one for Virtue.

Penn. He is fraudulent to be domineering, and liberal to be enslaving.

Can any thing be so insulting to equity and common-sense, as that a gang of priests and friars should be the absolute and self-elected potentates of enough territory and population to constitute a mighty Commonwealth? Alas! and such was it! With less than one-half of its present extent, it was the most potent, the most free, upon the earth. Let those who doubt, or rather who profess to doubt, which is best, arbitrary power or republican freedom, lift up their eyes, if their eyes can indeed be lifted up, to the contemplation on the one side of equal laws, of magistrates elected by the people, of frugal habits, of voluntary industry and adequate recompense: on the other, of insolent domination, of rulers imposed by force and maintained by terror, of dissolute manners no less in the lowest than in the highest, not springing from abundance, but permitted and thrown out as a covering and contentment for privations, a narcotic that at once assuages and destroys the appetite; then of gaming and beggary, which follow; of delapidated cities, of religious perjuries in the creating of saints to people them; and the triple pestilence of priests, monks, and marches, of which the last only ever intermits its ravages.

Peterborough. Vigorous description! irresistible truth! The Father of Lies himself cannot find a stone to throw against it: nevertheless I doubt whether you would bring over one convert, though you were permitted to preach it in the *Piazza di Spagna.*

Penn. I doubt it equally. Both in hearing and reading, men rather look for what suits their notions and opinions, than for what may alter and correct them. By which perversity they

often lose much advantage and much pleasure; since nothing is gained by taking up that which is already theirs, no more than by sitting astride their own horses in their own stable yards. They remain there without progression, though they fume, and chafe, and bounce as high on the saddle as if they galloped.

Peterborough. According to most systems of religion, it seems that the original design, and every botch made upon it, was to leave the greater part in shade, requiring glosses and interpretations, and consequently those who should be paid for making them and for keeping them in repair.

Penn. We have a God who is called the Prince of Peace; but we seem disposed to keep him in a long minority: and we are turning our eyes more fondly on another, whom we denominate the "Lord of Hosts."

O God of peace, Emmanuel! make us forgiving as thou wert forgiving, even on the cross! Make us tolerant, equitable, and humane!

Peterborough. I am glad you have stopped, William! If you had gone on, I should have prayed myself: for prayers [31] and gaping are contagious. Beside, in all likelihood, you would have prayed that no hirelings should enter the temple, as being contrary to the ordinances of Christianity: and then what the devil would become of our younger children, and chaplains, and college-tutors? Knock down the peerage at once, or keep its props fast in the ground. I will never quarrel with any man about the Church; but we may have a word or two, and a blow or two, about the Church establishment.

Penn. Not with me, I promise thee. What I think it wrong to hold I give up readily. Let us return to our discourse on Rome again. Such is the pertinacity of popes to the system from which they and their closer adherents draw their sustenance, that they never abandon a proven falsehood or an iniquitous demand, nor ever resign a pretension once acted on, nor pardon a reclama-

[31 "He (Peterborough) even acknowledged on one occasion to the Chevalier Ramsay, the extent to which he had been moved by the precept and example of Fénelon. 'On my word,' said he, 'I must quit this place as soon as possible. For, if I stay here another week, I shall be a Christian in spite of myself.'" Warburton's "Life of Peterborough," vol. i., p. 83. See also Ramsay's "Histoire de la Vie de Fénelon."]

tion made on any side for redress. Hence bishops are still nominated for villages and ruins and rocks *in partibus infidelium*; and hence the more precious privilege of holding an empire over empires. Every tie, human and divine, will be dissolved, entangled, or knotted, as suits the passions of the sitting pope, whose incubation is best warmed by ashes and blood. In the correspondence of Pius V. with Charles IX. and Mary [32] de Medici, he orders her to combat the enemies of Popery *until they are all massacred.* Afraid that she might not understand him, or that she might think he spoke figuratively or passionately, he repeats the injunction a few lines below, and uses the words *utter extermination.* The Protestants, vanquished by the Duke of Anjou, implore his intercession with his royal brother: on hearing which, his *Holiness* writes to his *Nobleness* that he ought through piety to be inexorable to all. Furthermore he tells the king that his Majesty will *tire God's patience* and provoke His anger. Suspecting that the gentle Charles might be influenced by the generosity of his brother, he commands him not to listen to the voice of friendship or of consanguinity. In another letter to Catherine, he says authoritatively, "Inflame the spirit of the King to annihilate the last remnant of civil war." Afterward, when peace was concluded, he writes thus to the Cardinal de Bourbon: "We expect you, in your prudence, to confound and overthrow the conditions of so pernicious a treaty. You owe this proof of zeal to God, to the King, and to the character you sustain."

No people are so deeply interested in abolishing the political power of Popery as those who believe in its religious doctrines. For where such doctrines are coupled with such perfidy and cruelty, they expose the holders of them to the worst suspicions, in many cases unjustly.

And what is the inscription on the walls and doors of Roman Catholic churches and chapels? Is it any commandment from the Decalogue, any proverb from Solomon, any precept from Jesus Christ? No: it is "Pray for the souls;" [33] and for what souls? Not for thy own, which 'twere easier to darn before it is turning to tinder; but for those in the fires of purgatory. *Praying* means

[32 Catherine de Medici.]

[33 In "A Seasonable Caveat against Popery," vii., Penn discusses the orthodoxy of praying for the dead.]

paying: the substance of the prayer is a compost of pounds, shillings, and pence. The salt water at the font, into which every one dips a finger, serves for tears; and the money-box, nailed above it, for repentance. These are essential parts of the religion, and not accidents: but if they were accidents, and not essential parts, a prudent man would keep away from a labyrinth, at every turn and passage of which there is a thief to pick his pocket, to tie his hands behind him if he resists, and to gag him if he speaks a word. How long, O Lord!—

Peterborough. Ten to one, the Lord will give you no answer, friend William! And in this instance I am more pious and resigned than you are; for I never ask of him how long he will be about any thing, particularly such as these, in which I know he likes to take his time. If you wish to know it, I can answer the question, and you need not look up into the clouds for its solution. It will be just as long as the rich can drive the poor before them, and the cunning can lead the rich. I wonder you should object to this order of priesthood, and to the quiet seizure of your property by this order, on your hesitation to deliver up as much of it as the venerable members may demand. Are they not wiser than you?

Penn. They are wise in their generation.

Peterborough. That is enough for anybody.

Penn. Thou misunderstandest me.

Peterborough. Ho! ho! if I had taken the other sense I should have replied, They ought to be, for they have a good deal of practice in it. Being wiser than you, which they tell you they are, and are ready to fight you with fists if you deny it, they know better than you do what they want, and what they are worth.

Penn. What they want they cannot tell, forasmuch as their wants increase with their possessions; but what they are worth we may well nigh guess.

Peterborough. They have texts from Scripture proving their divine right to tithes. The Jewish priesthood had them.

Penn. I do not deny their similitude to the Jews, if the old ones were like their descendants; but it pleased God to abolish this priesthood, and the law it followed.

Peterborough. It did not please God, nor the servants of God, to abolish tithes.

Penn. We must wait.

Peterborough. Indeed must you, and in the meantime count out your money. Now take another text: "The laborer is worthy of his hire."

Penn. Pay the laborer, if he *hath* labored and thou hast hired him: if he hath never labored, and if thou hast never hired him, bid him good morrow. Pay the laborer, I repeat it; but pay not the priest.[34] If thou callest him a clown or a hind, he would maltreat thee for miscalling him; while he is fain to call thee somewhat less: not clown or hind, but cattle. Use and custom reconcile men to any thing; otherwise there are of such tempers, that, on receiving so unseemly and rude an appellation, they would look into the hedgerow for some lithe ash-plant, and feel in their pockets for wherewithal to cut it,—that is, if no discreet friend were at their side to moderate their inclination and to withhold them.

Peterborough. Mounted on a stout contemplative black mare, with a bushy mane and tail, a broad white streak down the forehead, white likewise one fetlock and hoof.

Penn. Ay, ay, more likely to find him on such a creature, than on one opening and shutting his nostrils like a fop at a perfumer's; one as ready to snap slily at his comrade as a competitor in the cabinet; one touching the ground with the extremity of the foot whenever he stops for a moment, as though forsooth that same foot of his were a divining rod,—so important and majestical doth he appear to hold himself; a gelding with a silvery tail, and scarcely enough of it to whip a syllabub or fray a gossamer, with a body bright and flashy as a marigold, thin and bony as a Mordaunt, and just as unsteady and trickish and mettlesome, and loud in his snorting as a young patriot under the hammer.

Peterborough. Egad! if ever my gelding should be stolen, I will beg a copy of this description for an advertisement.

[34 "Priests have been like troops of thieves by the highway-side, that have robbed by consent, and 'like Priest, like People:' For first it has been the practice of the clergy of all lands to insinuate themselves, by their policy and flatteries, into the favour of the princes of this world, and thereby procured to themselves *large taxes* on the people." Letter to the Princess and Countess at Hertford, in Germany, p. 408. Cf. also note 10.]

I see I must clap spurs again: we are off to the steeple-hunt.

Whatever may be objected to the Catholic faith, I find the members of it better-tempered people, when the pope and his *posse* do not stir them up, than other sects. Even the priests and monks, if you leave their temporals untouched and unthreatened, are jovial and rational. I have known many instances of it, for a person who has had so little to do with 'em; one of which I am certain will amuse you.

When I was in Paris, I was admitted to visit a young lady of some attractions. Going out of the door one morning, I met a Capuchin on the steps. I had seen him in the street too frequently, and, having remarked that he eyed me more curiously than I liked, I asked him somewhat fiercely what he wanted there. He bowed profoundly, and answered that he came to supplicate for relief to the necessities of the monastery.

"You Capuchins and other monks," replied I, "never enter a house where there is only an ugly woman or a poor one."

Again he bowed, and more profoundly than before. "Sir," said he, "we have ugliness and poverty enough among ourselves: I came, as I told you, to obtain what the convent wanted."

I then observed that he was a handsome man, about thirty years of age, of a correctness in his language that indicated a good education, and of an easiness in his demeanor that mere impudence may lend for a moment, but cannot long sustain; it was such as gave me an assurance of high birth, and of excellent connections formed early. Vexed and ashamed that I had treated as a *roturier* a gentleman whom perhaps nothing but the hope of gratifying his amiable passions had cowled and frocked, I shook him cordially by the hand, dropped a louis into his hood, and apologized for offering only the yellow of the egg, having but that part remaining from my collation. He hesitated a moment; then said he never could object to partake my fast with me, and should be contented in future with a less complimentary distribution.

Penn. I have no proof before me that the Capuchin, as thou callest the man, came to the female's house with any pravity of intention: yet he sinned; forasmuch as, having made and sworn to vows of poverty expressing the rejection of money, he received thy gold knowing it to be gold, and other than what

thou calledst it, the yellow of an egg. Therefore, whatever might be the placidity of his temper, and certain, as thou wilt have it, that another day he fasted on the white, I cannot in my conscience acquit him of offence.

If Popery, however, displays the dexterous filcher, the Church of England hath greatly the advantage over her in the exertion of brawny strength in the meadow and farm-yard. Neither the Catholic priesthood, nor any other that ever existed among men, even in times of ignorance and paganism, hath been so litigious and oppressive. In another age or two they may grow weary of kicking and cuffing us; but they will never cease to exhibit their agility and spirit in leaping over the palings of our corn-stacks, or their observance of the most rigid rules of right in watching our garden-gate for us, and weeding out the tithes of our beet and parsley. The Catholic priest, when he enters a family, bringeth at least a pretext of some spiritual concern, some confession to hear, or some admonition to impart; but your Church-of-England text-and-tithe collector holdeth in derision all such idle occupations, and intrudeth on your substance with a pistol in the fist, and with a curse upon the lip, as little a time in discharging.

Surely men can judge for themselves what instructor they shall place the most confidence in: as surely ought they to take his instruction rather than a stranger's whose first step is intrusion, whose second is violence, and whose every succeeding one leaves defiance and hatred behind it. What wonder that the beneficent hand of Religion should be swollen, festered, and palsied, nailed as it hath been so long to the posts of Palace-yard! If she be spiritual, she belongeth not to the State: if she be carnal, she belongeth not to Heaven.

Is not religion, of any plain, honest, unadulterated kind, as easily taught as morality? Again, is it not taught as easily as agriculture or chemistry? Yet we have no establishment, no order of citizens set apart for teaching one or other of these, and demanding from the remainder, willing or unwilling, a tenth of the produce of their land, and another tenth of their labor upon it: though agriculture and chemistry require more study, more exertion, more attention, more precision, than the acquiring and holding forth of those dogmas, which, while they tell us to love our neighbor—

Peterborough. As ourselves: a thing impossible.

Penn. If thou findest it so, leave it a little on the way side, and let me go on. The dogmas of your gentry in lawn and purple, while they persuade us to love our neighbor, order us also to damn him everlastingly; and are slower, I opine, than the other two sciences,—those of agriculture and chemistry,—in giving the laborer a clean shirt and good dinner, and in shutting out the fiercer or the subtler marauders from which no path of life is exempt, active in spring and autumn, active in winter and summer, at undermining or battering his frail corporeal tenement.

Peterborough. People must be imposed upon for their good. He who said in his heart that all men are liars was none himself on that occasion. Lies and liars are the things and persons the most necessary in our sublunary condition; and without a tinge of falsehood the colors of the fairest character are faint.

Penn. Hold, hold! or I whip thy horse before me, since I may not ride faster. One would think the cloven hoof surmounted the uncloven.

Peterborough. I will proceed more circumspectly. Grant me this. A man in a wig gains credit, where one with a cropped head would be kicked out of doors. In religion, too, a white hand waves about it more persuasion than a browner; and a hairy one in church would be looked at as suspiciously as Esau's. My father was fond of repeating two couplets, which he was likewise fond of attributing to a maiden aunt: she, however, although the stoutest of Episcopalians, disclaimed them.

Little that theologian teaches
Under whose text hang tattered breeches.
Devil take him who disbelieves
Verities shaken from lawn-sleeves.

Penn. There is soundness of observation in the first stave of the canticle: let us hope that so sedate and curious an observer spake the remainder more in levity than in malice. Otherwise it were well if we ascribe it to the sudden influx of melancholic humor, which we may collect from the import of the words preceding.

Peterborough. Even had we no establishments, we should still have sects.

Penn. What then? Whom would they fight for? who

would pay them? Although there were no establishments, there might indeed be sects in religion, as there anciently were in philosophy: yet either we must suppose that Christianity is prouder and crueller and more avaricious than Philosophy, or we must admit that establishments, and not Christianity, have, wherever they existed, raised such tumults, seized upon such wealth, and shed (O blessed Redeemer! was not thine enough?) such torrents of human blood. If Philosophy has not done it with her sects, neither would Christianity have done it with hers, without her purple and pretorians. These are as unfriendly to the one as to the other; and, while they exist upon earth, the more civilized parts of it can expect no better state, long together, than external wars, internal discord, and universal oppression. Revolutions may for a while relieve them; chastisement and the fear of it may render the princes more conciliatory and submissive: but the poison will be poured again into the drowsy ear by those upon whose pillow they slumber. Hence even the recluse and quiet reasoner will be tempted to point toward the natives of these wilds; and some one, in the moroseness of sad triumph, will say to the inhabitant of the city, Are not such men more happy, are not they more virtuous, are not they more dignified, and—O slave! so bruised and abject as to be insensible to thy slavery—are not they more deeply enlightened, more vitally wise, than thou?

Peterborough. There is a strange idea gone abroad for a long time, and moving about much at its ease, by which we are to understand that *minister*[35] means *master*,—the exact opposite of its original and right import. Thus the ministers of the Church call themselves the Church, and the ministers of the State are the State. Now, in my humble opinion, the State is composed of all the *people* in it, and the Church of all the *Christians*. If this opinion is correct, and ever should be acted on consistently, what will become of our princely hierarchy? And may it not happen that some of those who carry white and black rods shall lay them aside, and with equally kind officiousness help the traveller to mount at the inn-door, and snatch his skirt from between him and the saddle-bag?

Penn. Political institutions, or *establishments*, should be

[35 Cf. "No Cross No Crown,' xii., §. 7.]

founded on Christianity, and not Christianity on them. This perverts the order of things; which order, insomuch as passive example can effect, we would set right. But what is example, what is reason, what is Christianity itself, in opposition to the force of wealth under the shield of government? Every rich family sees or imagines its interest in the present system, which, whatever it may be called, is no better nor other than Popery in any State throughout Europe; and every poor one hopes it, excepting those few who look to one rule of faith, under one immutable and immortal teacher, where they indeed find room enough to place their interests and rest their hopes.

Nothing can exceed the impudence of men pretending to be Christians, professing to follow the ordinances of Christ, reproaching the pope for his perversion of them, and themselves at the same time violating the most positive and unequivocal command of our blessed Lord and Saviour: "Call no man your *father* upon earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." Now, though dignities of state were left untouched, dignities, as men vainly call them, in religion are here distinctly and solemnly forbidden. I say nothing of the prevarications and perjuries that must be crossed to reach them. Can the calmest face, can the best-plaited lawn-sleeves, can the highest-drawn pink stockings, can the comeliest thigh-cases,[36] the most nicely puckered at the kneeband, or can the most virginal apron, do away with or cover this? In the ritual of the apostles there was no string of prayers ordained, no dressing and undressing in the public place of worship, no pagan ceremonies, no other precedency than eldership. Priests, we have heard, were appointed to put down the Devil. If they have been seventeen centuries about it, and could neither do it while they were holier men and worked miracles, nor afterward when they became less holy but more wise, and had learned all his tricks and devices, it is time methinks they should give in and own themselves worsted. If, on the contrary, they have put him down, or if he has been put down without them, or if we have brought him to decent terms, or if he lieth quiet by his fireside of his own accord, and we no longer feel our-

[36 First ed. reads: "comeliest breeches, the most nice puckered at the kneeband, do away," &c.]

selves in danger from him, we may just as reasonably and constitutionally demand from Parliament the disbanding of them as of any other body of troops appointed for any other service, when that service hath been performed. But if, after so many thousand years, he fighteth only the more desperately for the blows he hath received, I would try other methods of attack and other implements of warfare, or I would keep myself shut up close in my fastnesses at home. Are scouts and watchmen here likewise necessary? Enow of men for the purpose will ever be remaining, whose vanity and ambition, whose love of teaching and of talking, whose impatience to display a fine voice, a fine person, a fine gesture, a fine doctrine, a fine metaphor, will clothe them in the garb of piety, and place them astride the gate of the sheepfold. Furthermore, let us hope that better inducements will exist at all times, and that the necessities of the soul will be supplied in their due season; that every father and mother, every experienced man, every considerate woman, will exercise the duties of private life and social, by inculcating those morals wherefrom arise the listener's content and the teacher's security; and which, if no other benefit accrued from them, would detruncate our rank expenditure on the three most wasteful and unprofitable of consumers: on him who carries the sword in his hand; and on those two wilier ones who carry it in their mouths, flaming and empoisoned.

Peterborough. But Christ himself said, if what I fancy I once heard at a sermon is exact, which indeed it may not be, for I was half-asleep, "I bring not peace, but a sword."

Penn. Christ never said any thing like it;[37] for Christ never contradicted his own doctrine. We find the words among better; and we find them attributed to him,—falsely, falsely. No construction can ever make Christ a murderer; though his name hath been used among men for hardly any other purpose. Either the words were reversed by accident, which is the more charitable supposition; or were corrupted by design, which I am afraid is the more probable and correct one. Some conciliatory and harmonizing theologians would assure us that

[37 Penn was not very likely to use so much freedom with the text of the New Testament.]

they never were changed, interpolated, or transposed; and that they signify the hard service of the first Christians, and the persecutions they must suffer. This is foretold plainly enough in other places: *here* the expression would show the *object* of Christ's mission, and not its accidents; that he came to bring slaughter, and not peace. Therefore, even if we found it in the writings of all his disciples and of all his apostles in the same terms, we should at once reject it; because it never could have been said by the person who proclaimed universal good-will and unqualified forbearance, supposing him sent, as we do, by the God of mercies, and breathing the spirit of truth.

Peterborough. There is one text of Scripture, and only one, upon which all establishments and sects agree, excepting yours: which makes them all think you an unconscionable set of people.

Penn. That text doth not occur to me at the present time.

Peterborough. Priests and rulers preach and proclaim it incessantly; and, what is more remarkable, act as they proclaim and preach.

Penn. Canst thou repeat it?

Peterborough. "Kill and eat."

It appears to me that there was more Christianity before Christ than there has been since.

Penn. Hast thou any objection that there should be more after than there was before?

Peterborough. None at all.

Penn. Let us then begin to speed it, and to recover as much time as we can. It consoleth me to find that thou occasionally dost think on worship.

Peterborough. I have left it off.

Penn. What was thy motive; if, indeed, thou didst not drop away from it through lightness of mind?

Peterborough. I dropped away from it through piety itself.

Penn. I am afraid to question thee further, lest thou say aught irreverent.

Peterborough. Reverence urged me. The clergymen told us repeatedly that we were all children of Satan, and ordered us in the next breath to turn him out of doors. Lear's children were

detestable for this very proceeding: yet Lear was neither older nor madder, nor was he worse pelted.

Religion is apt to wince, if you handle her quarters near her stalls and mangers. Here, however, one may treat her as having grown more tractable; and since her price is out of the question, and no dealer is within ear-shot, we may express a wish that those usually about her had consulted their own interests better, and had attempted to show us that she can bring us to happiness somewhat less circuitously, and without relay and bating.

Penn. The road hath been pointed out unto us by the same Divine hand that made us; and such is, and such was ever, our hanging back, I do not wonder that God repented of creating man.

Peterborough. Nor I, since He must have foreknown the trouble we should give Him, and that we should be even less obedient to His Son than our first progenitor had been to *Him.* But it is surely by some unfair interpretation, that the living God is represented to us as hardening the heart of Pharaoh expressly that he might disobey His commands; which disobedience caused the death of that king, and of thousands with him: of thousands who were innocent even of having their hearts hardened; on the contrary, who were engaged at the very moment in bringing God's tragedy to the close, and performing the duty which He Himself inculcates, of obedience to the prince.

Penn. Worm! worm! thou wouldst question the Lord?

Peterborough. Not I, indeed; but I would question those who dress Him in their own dirty suits, to frighten folks out of their senses and their money. And even them I would let pass on, when I had joked or reasoned them into a passion; for I am as much an Episcopalian at heart as any of them, and see the matter in the same light. Nevertheless I can allow my zeal for the Church of England to subside a little, in compliance with the humors of the weak and lukewarm; and indeed I hoped to fall in with your opinions and feelings, when I showed the folly and culpability of men who would represent our Creator as inconsistent and cruel.

Penn. We appeal to the Gospel, not to the old Jews.

Peterborough. Perhaps there are some reasons why I should hit upon the old Jews first. Now, then, we here have done with

them; and I beg you to give me a little light on the sepulchre of our Saviour, as there appears to be some discordance in the history of those who visited it, and of those who were found at it by the visitors, and in the number of times that their master came among them afterward.

Penn. Follow thou the righteousness of Christ, His gentleness, His forbearance; and leave His ascension to the more speculative, and His sepulchre to the more devout.

Peterborough. Would He, with such righteousness, such gentleness, such forbearance, have treated Ananias and Sapphira as Peter his successor did? Certainly the popes descend in a right line from this prince of the apostles; who very properly bears in his statue the head of Jupiter the thunderer. If he really did toward Ananias and Sapphira what we are bound to believe he did, he neglected the example and disobeyed the commands of his master, and he infringed the laws and usurped the magistrature of his country. Would any modern king, Christian or Mahomedan or idolater, would any republic of any age, permit a private man to enforce, under pain or threat of death, so rigid and bitter an equality? Would you yourselves, who come nearest to the discipline of Christ, insist upon it? I do not ask whether you would point out for reprobation, I do not ask whether you would strike with extinction, a virtuous, generous, unsuspicious couple, who had given to the indigent the greater part of their possessions. Extinction for what crime?—the crime of holding back from their enthusiastic prodigality a slender pittance, with an object perhaps as justifiable and as sacred as charity itself. Their motives were unexamined, their cause unheard. We may suppose them desirous of repurchasing some quiet country-house, some shady little meadow, some garden with its trellised alcove or its woodland path at the end of it, the scene of their earliest tenderness and first caresses. There may be things about us so dear to us, that we should almost bear our soundest flesh to be cut away before we could surrender them to another; and from a feeling so very different from avarice, that the avaricious man is perhaps the only one who is quite incapable of it. There are localities that have in them somewhat of an identity with ourselves; insomuch that, in almost all ages and countries, the poets have appealed to their consciousness: and poets search out and seize on resemblances of truth, even more striking than truth itself.

Penn. What does that prove?

Peterborough. It proves the affection we may naturally bear to certain parts of property, consistently with the most generous spirit, the most exuberant and profuse liberality. We[38] must believe the sudden and almost simultaneous death of this unfortunate couple to have been designed and exhibited by Saint Peter in order to strike terror into the disobedient, who might withhold from the common stock any particle of their property.

Penn. Be candid, be just, and veracious. Remember, he told Ananias it had been at his option to give in, or decline to give in, the whole; to enter or not to enter into that society of Christians which agreed to hold all property in common. The punishment of perfidy was exemplary, but not severe; it was striking, but not painful. Thou appearest to intimate that the apostle called it down on the offender, who brought it on his own head. The chastisements of the Almighty may (we hope) be averted; never can they be accelerated or aggravated by human prayer. Paul, after his conversion, never was intolerant or inhumane.

Peterborough. As we cannot see clearly, though we may suspect, the aim of such an institution, let us try whether we cannot find out the natural and necessary end of it. Nearly all Christian sects, and mostly the Episcopalian, have greatly corrected the practice of the apostles: which they never would have done if it had been ordained by God. So much my mother, the Church of England, will not permit me to doubt of: and now from the motives we will proceed to the results. You, who calculate better than I do, may inform me how long could have existed, if the laws had allowed it, the order of society laid down by Saint Peter for those who followed the apostles. Since it was necessary that all the new Christians should sell their property, the purchasers would have the whole at nearly their own price. Hence the greatest misfortune that could befall the faithful would be the propagation of the faith itself. If the apostles worked with equal zeal and success, and converted the rich as well as the poor, where could they find purchasers? They sold both lands

[38 From "We" to "*Peterborough*" (16 lines) added in 2nd ed. The case of Ananias and Sapphira is discussed under the head of avarice in "No Cross No Crown," xiii., § 19.]

and houses: where would the people live in winter? For the mountainous parts (and nearly all Judea is of that quality) are cold and stormy. In the imagery of the Psalms, we find flakes of snow and violent winds and tempests. After the sale and alienation of their houses, both sexes must herd together. In fact, they did so; and their guides were, in the nature of things, obliged to make loud and incessant complaints against certain immoralities which they did not or would not believe to be dependent on their own system, and inevitable in it.

But my main and plain question is, How long could the money have lasted? Certainly not for two whole generations: what, then, would have become of the next?

Penn. We want leisure, and pen, ink, and paper, for these calculations. The Lord would have taken care that nothing should be deficient for such as believed in Him.

Peterborough. I am answered!

Penn. Ride on then in quietness and sobriety. Every child, six or seven years old, thinks his father can do every thing and knows every thing: and we smile at his simplicity. Are there no intelligences that smile at ours, who, in the meridian and maturity of the faculties, so act toward others and toward ourselves as if our Father in the heavens knew nothing and could do nothing? The little boy of that age, whom thou tellest he is older than the great and strong coach-horse, will disbelieve thee, forming his idea of age from size and strength: again thou smilest at such simplicity; yet here the reasoning powers are coming into action, although the powers of reflection are yet dormant and inert: here likewise I could point out to thee in riper years a worse and weaker inconsistency of unbelief.

Law should provide that the inhabitants of the land be brought up religiously; but never let her dandle Religion in her lap, play with her at the desk, cater for her, pamper her with sweetmeats, indulge her in childish freaks and acrimonious passions, teach her cant and cozenage, mimic steps and sidelong glances, and take her thus accomplished into partnership.

Peterborough. I never was fond of questioning or debating on matters in which I have no practice or skill: otherwise I would ask how it happens that you, the most remote of all Christians

from the papists, employ nevertheless excommunication.[39] If going to places of worship is good and needful, it certainly is most so in those who have done wrong. The pope on the contrary does not wait for an incorrigible fault: the moment an order of his is transgressed, let the offence itself be the lightest possible, he shuts the doors of Saint Peter in the face of the transgressor, and forbids him to say his prayers and seek forgiveness in any church upon earth.*

Penn. We have nothing to do with such a fisherman, or such fish. We never excommunicate, while the moral character of the sinner hath a sound or curable part left, or while a hope survives of reclaiming him. We cannot issue an arbitrary order, nor receive one. Paul recommends to his disciple Titus, that he should admonish a heretic *once or twice;* and, if he cannot convert him, that he should *leave* him: a punishment (if one at all) very different from the pulley and the gridiron. And what was heresy in those early days? Not a diversity of opinion on a metaphysical point, for such questions were started later, but a rash determination to set aside the ordinances of Christ Himself, at that time the sole authority and guide. Moderate as this chastisement is—

Peterborough. Chastisement!

Penn. Without talking of chastisement we cannot talk agreeably with any denomination of Christians. Paul, I was about to remark, is severer than his Master, who orders that the admonition shall be repeated *thrice.*

Peterborough. How! after his Master's message at his humor! and scratch out the best line in it!

Penn. He hath only too much zeal.

Peterborough. All the rogues that ever lived have brought little misery upon the world, in comparison with those who had too much zeal.

[39 See "The Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers," iv., p. 772, esp. "The power they exercise is such as Christ hath given to His own people to the end of the world . . . viz.:—'To *oversee, exhort, reprove,* and after long waiting upon the disobedient and refractory, to *disown* them as any more of their *communion.*'"]

* Qui contra mandatum hoc nostrum fecerit, is universæ Dei ecclesiæ toto orbe terrarum expers esto.

Penn. True: but take heed lest thy mouth offend, and thy speech give offence.

Peterborough. I am called an infidel; and an infidel I am: but is my infidelity so mischievous in itself, or in its consequences, as the conduct of that man who exaggerates the words or changes the directions of his Master?

In what and against whom am I an infidel? At worst I do not find reason enough to believe what others do. If I believe I see a tree, it may not be a tree: but how can I help believing that I see a tree? And if I see no tree, and cannot by any stretch of vision see it, will the smoke of faggots mend my eyesight?

Do not groan, William, nor let your arms hang down in that manner; for, if your mare should stumble among these old charred roots, it might do somewhat worse, I apprehend, than blacken your dove-colored thigh-case.

Penn. Wonderful, but saddening to the soul, unless we had better hopes from better justice! Whoever thinks worthily of God is in danger of being styled an atheist, and whoever would frame his will to the rules of the Divine one, a visionary, an enthusiast, or a hypocrite. Fears and formularies, received by men from men, are called religion; belief and trust in Providence, truth, kindness, equity, mere things of this world. Oh were they so, were they so indeed! then the confines of this world would touch and almost be confounded with the other; and our hearts and imaginations might every day take exercise and repose there. Why are so many folks necessary with parliaments and penalties, with castles and battlements and bayonets and bells, to make us of a true religion? Why are we in a state of despondency without plush, and damned without the dyer? We Friends are reprobated: wherefore? because we offer no sureties to God for infants whom we may never see after they grow up, and about whose conduct it is deemed needless to be solicitous, and unbecoming to be inquisitive; because we have no hand laid for a moment on our heads in childhood to make us upright and steady for life; because [40] we do not take a morsel of bread and a sip of wine in the morning, to remind us of eating a supper of which others were in fact the eaters.

[40] First ed. reads: "because we do not sit down on our knees with a book for the sake of society, nor take a morsel," &c.]

Peterborough. This part at least of the vital in religion is, methinks, what the imitators might imitate better with little pains.

Penn. I do not approve of thy scoffing at the *vital in religion.*

Peterborough. Friend Penn! every man hath his favorite guard and pass. You made several lunges at the midriff; I made but one.

Penn. Thy words were inconsiderate, and might become a stumbling block of offence.

Peterborough. I now perceive, my worthy friend, no man ever fought for religion: it was for some little idol which his own heart had fashioned, or which, whether bought or given or snatched up and run off with, he carried in secret under his doublet, either to help him in his crimes or to keep him at least from punishment. You need none such: but every kind of love must have its object; self-love, among the rest, an object the most distinct and definite.

Penn. Thou art hard upon me: and yet, who knoweth whether God hath not given thee on this occasion the spirit of truth, to strike me the more forcibly? I have suspected in myself the thing thou sayest: nay, I have found it, and have cast it out. It may have entered again under the haze of zeal, and have stood invisible in the high place, in the rock of Zion, in the shadow of the temple.

Come over unto us! come over unto us! come into our camp! and thou shalt rejoice with exceeding great joy.

Peterborough. I am not so wild: I am on leave of absence.

Penn. Be persuaded at least that with us excommunication is according to the command of Christ, although in churches it be not. Excommunication precluded no man formerly from the enjoyment of legal protection and of civil rights; but only from the communion of believers, from their assemblies, their contritions, and their fasts: a penalty by no means intolerable to people of such a turn.

Peterborough. I could have borne it myself, though none of the meekest. These humble men, however, would not let their superiors sit quiet.

Penn. Thou wrongest them. When they grew rich they grew restless.

Peterborough. I could have cured this disorder in them.

Penn. Even bishops, and those of Rome too, so far from assailing the rulers of the world, requested and implored their protection; so far from excommunicating them, as they did afterward, and ordering their subjects to rebel against them, they came forward as supplicants for gratuities and favors: and boasted of deserving them, by having prayed in their churches for the safety of the prince and the prosperity of the empire.

Peterborough. Ho! ho! they did, did they? I always had heard and believed that our own holy fathers bore no resemblance whatsoever to the old ones: I see they differ little in essentials.

Penn. Christianity, in my view of her, not only makes us able to bear our sufferings, but in great measure to avoid them; not only to obey, but to select the proper objects of obedience. She enlarges the intellectual and moral world about us; and by this enlargement the horrible signs of thy zodiac, friend Mordaunt, if gape upon us they must, will gape upon us after longer intervals. But I trust that a new order of things hath commenced and will continue. In England you may want perhaps, for some time longer, kings, bishops, chancellors, lords: in America our wishes are humble and tranquil, by not having such objects of excitement and delight before our eyes. We shall be contented with equality of rank and right, with honest, unpresuming, plain-spoken Christianity, and with a paternal distribution of uncostly justice.

Peterborough. Though addicted to no particular system of philosophy or religion or government, I am convinced that if you destroy the institutions and customs of men, however bad a great part of these may be, you also chill the blood of their attachments which are requisite for the prosperity and indeed for the safety of nations. At the same time, I am not sorry to find you setting an example here of sobriety and forbearance. These virtues will gradually allure and conciliate many, by the wealth and respectability attendant on them. If, however, all Englishmen were at once such as the Society of Friends, they would have their throats cut before the next harvest: a consideration which has hindered the greater and better part of Christianity from being yet admitted in any European State.

Penn. My young friend, genius with thee is like the bird of

Paradise, all wing: should it wish to alight and settle on any thing, it finds under it no support.

Peterborough. Penn, I was once a great admirer of Rochefoucauld, and fancied his *Maxims* were oracles. It happened that, quoting them one day at dinner, my adversary told me I had reversed the sentiment; I found I had. Upon this, I began to reverse, for curiosity's sake, almost every third sentence of my shrewd and smart philosopher; and discovered that, like superfine cloth, they look as comely the wrong side outward as the right, wherever I could give as easy and quick a turn as that of the original. This persuaded me that we receive for the wisest things the gracefullest and the boldest, and that what are called speculative truths are in general not only unimportant, but no truths at all. Industry, cleanliness, equanimity, beneficence, are the intelligible parts of your system: these constitute civilization, and will not suffer it, I hope, to slide or bulge or decline. It is quite a new and ingenious thought, to try whether Christianity can stand alone: and the experiment is well worthy of our attention.

Penn. Thou speakest with levity and indifference, young man, upon matters of eternal interest.

Peterborough. I know nothing, I must repeat it, about these affairs; but I have experienced that some of eternal interest, if there be any such in reasoning, ought to be held as lightly as a rapier, or they may be twisted out of our grasp into the air. Having asked the discreet and pious of several persuasions whether in their judgment God alone is uncreated, infinite, and eternal, each, however he might differ from the rest on other topics, replied in the affirmative. What an opinion must I form on the perversion of the human mind, afraid as I find it everywhere of admitting that time and space must also be eternal, infinite, and uncreated! Day[41] and night only mark time out, and are in regard to it what clocks and watches are. God Himself, although He may be said to extend through all space, cannot be said to extend any farther: yet what is *through* is *beyond.* Are we not here in want of terms?

Penn. Rather, in want of curbs to check us on a precipice.

[41] From "Day" to "terms" (5 lines); and from "Rather" to "precipice" added in 2nd ed.]

Those doctors you have cited would have acted more judiciously and honestly in owning that they knew nothing about the business, and that it is a question which our Saviour did not come upon earth to agitate or to solve. We have already more knowledge than we are disposed to bring into use: when we have well practised the whole of it, perhaps He who gave us it may give us more. One would imagine that the wisdom of those who govern might be better for a supply now and then from the wisdom of those who reason in retirement. Instead of which, politicians and philosophers are the two classes of men the most opposite in the world, standing with their eyes fixed one upon the other, in suspicion, or indignation, or scorn. The most extravagant are the oftenest quoted; but it is merely to exhibit the futility of innovation or reform. I do not assert that there is a single axiom in Plato, which a minister in any country or any age ought to receive and act on: but many of them, taking up his fame when it suits their purpose, announce him as a high authority, holding in derision those who stand nearer, such as Harrington and Milton, superior to him in gravity and in virtue.

Peterborough. I remember one axiom of the divine man, which every minister in my time has both received and acted on.

Penn. Although I perused his dialogues on polity a little while ago, I cannot recollect it.

Peterborough. He forbids the use of falsehood to the community at large, but allows it to the rulers:[42] just as the papal priests do with the wine at the sacrament, giving it one to the other, but withholding it from the people. Plato calls it a medicine, and tells us we must concede it to the physician in order that we may use it as he pleases; but we must let no other man meddle with it. Surely, my friend Penn, you cannot deny that persons in authority, with us, cherish this Platonic sentiment with somewhat more than Platonic affection.

Penn. I grieve at the man's vacuity who imagines that falsehood, of all vices the easiest to take root and the hardest to extirpate, is likely to be long in overrunning the country, when the breath of those who govern us blows it abroad at will in every direction. Beside, did he not see that, sooner or later, the lie

[42 Republic, iii., 398.]

must be exposed; and that not only the bad example would ramify in the closest and most sheltered concerns of life, but that the government itself must be rendered unstable, when the governors were found cheats and liars?

Peterborough. He would not permit the soldiers to reside in the city.

Penn. In other words, he would not permit them to care a farthing for the townsmen they are to protect: in that case a slight matter would incline them to the invader.

Peterborough. Not at all: he provides against it by informing them it is idle and sacrilegious to aspire after the poor corrupt money current upon earth.

Penn. They would buffet him for an impostor, or tie him to his bedpost for a madman.

Peterborough. He has provided against that also. He tells them another story first; he says to them: "You and your arms and your equipments sprang up from the bosom of your Mother Earth. You must protect your Mother Earth, and likewise her weaker children, your little brother fellow-citizens. As for gold, the Almighty mixed a quantity of it in your primary conformation, which adapts and entitles you to command; while in your little brother fellow-citizens he mixed up only brass and iron, rendering them fitter for artisans and husbandmen." [43]

Penn. I remember this foolery.

Peterborough. Now tell me, friend Penn, whether you yourself are not, in some sort, equally liable to be taken for a visionary.

Penn. Thou mayest take me for a visionary, friend Mordaunt, but thou shalt never take me for a liar.

Peterborough. Of that indeed there is no danger. I would have added the chief reason on which you might appear as a visionary to many, or rather indeed to most people.

Penn. Prythee add it: since, should it be wanting, I see not how thou mayest so soon correct me.

Peterborough. You fancy we can live without war.

Penn. That is, I fancy we can live without slaughter. It

[43 Republic, iii., 415-417. The passage in quotation marks is only an abstract.]

sounds absurdly, no doubt. A strange fancy, a hot, wild, wrong-headed aspiration in me and my brethren! No wonder thou laughest at so novel, so irregular, so awkward a stretch and strain of my humble and squat imagination.

Peterborough. Do you believe that others would let you remain quiet, and admire, with uplifted and united palms, your industry and your innocence? Or, rather, that to flourish is not to invite the visit and quicken the appetite of spoliation? Do you expect that the bad man will forbear because the good man will?

Penn. I believe that the desire of possession is universal, or nearly; that it may produce good, and that it may produce evil. Property is the bond and seal of civilization. The sight of it, however, will arouse in those who have it not, and in some also who have it, the lust of violating it. Prisons and chains and halters are coarse reproofs at best. If we would be rather less dignified, and rather more humane, we should be safer and usefuller. Cannot we go among those whom we suspect of rapacity or cruelty, and speak tenderly with 'em, and remonstrate reasonably? Can we not lead them to our garners, our growing corn, our furrows, and say to them: "These very things which you so much covet are your own upon the same conditions as they were ours or our fathers'. They were labored *for* before they were labored *in*. Believe me, friends, there is less *wear and tear* in the body and in the mind to obtain them as we have done than as you would do. Doubtless you love your children: provide then for them, as ye may with certainty, by teaching them how to provide for themselves; how to be out of want and danger, out of grief and sorrow; how to form those marriages which will bring them into peaceful and plentiful houses, where they will be welcome and respected."

Reason preceding a chastisement, forming no portion of it and unconnected with it, has an effect on all; following one, it comes as a scoff, or as a section of the sentence.

Ideas of property cannot be very correct where there is little distribution of it; and those whom we call savages we often may find thieves. But heavier injustice is done every six months in our English court of chancery, the Acropolis of Themis, than

by all the savages on our borders in as many years. I have found them universally just, whenever I argued patiently and mildly, and greatly more calm and civil than our silken sergeants. Men are never very unjust until they see and enter and grope their way along the perplexities and subterfuges of law. Feeling at first no reluctance to run into it, they experience at last no compunction to run through it.

In England the statutes are often in opposition to religion, and religion to God's anointed, as you call the thing. Why cannot both together rest upon one foundation? Is Christ unable or unworthy to lead us?—reject Him then totally. But if His example and precepts are such as of themselves can make us virtuous and happy, should we not follow them without any deviation; and without stopping at any half-way house to assemble a riotous and roaring party, to elect a toast-master, to booze and confound our intellects, to quarrel and fight, to slaver and slumber, and, after such heartiness and manliness, to toss about and tumble, and find ourselves at last unfit for the prosecution of our journey? Our master doth not permit us to compromise and quarter with another: He doth not permit us to spend an hour with Him and then to leave Him. Either our actions must be regulated by Him wholly, both individually and socially, both politically and morally, or He turns us out. We must resign the vanities and vices, the prostrations and adorations, of the heathen world altogether, or avoid His presence. We must call no others by His name, until those others shall possess the same authority and power. He did not place Himself, great as He was, on the tribunitial chair with Cæsar, nor on the judgment seat with Felix: He governed, but it was in spirit; He commanded, but it was of God. Christianity could never have been brought into contempt or disrepute, unless she had been overlaid with false ornaments and conducted by false guides. Her expounders and high-priests, in all monarchies, are prompt and propense to be keepers of the regalia, and studious how they shall be, externally and intrinsically, as unlike as possible to the disciples and apostles.

Peterborough. I am afraid, my friend William, you will generally find men of genius indifferent to the externals of religion.

Penn. What are its externals? Canst thou point out to me the place where vitality and feeling commence, in this purest and most delicate of existences? By *externals* thou canst mean nothing but *administration.* Men of genius then, I am to suppose, are utterly indifferent to the administration of religion and law, if the law or the religion in themselves be good?

Peterborough. I did not say law.

Penn. I insist that religion is law: not the law of popes and parliaments, but the law of God. I do not contend that it is graven on the heart of man: nevertheless I must ever think that the heart of man is the better and the richer for receiving it. I will not assert to thee that corn was scattered by Providence on each side of us: yet how pleasantly these green waves do rustle in the air, whispering to us of divine bounty, and displaying to us how much better is a state of peace and industry, than of ferocity and idleness. And what is genius, so elevated in its disdain, so glorious in its indifference? This is a question, one would conceive, to be solved more easily. I will not take it, however, where thou wouldst rather let it lie, from among our dialecticians; although there can be no great genius where there is not profound and continued reasoning. I will not lead thee to Hooker or Taylor, or that loftier man now living, Isaac Barrow, but among those rather who delighted more in the excursions of fancy and imagination,—which the above-mentioned had not to seek, but entertained with equal fondness and better mastery at home. Was Chaucer, then, indifferent? was Spenser? was Milton? Did they not all oppose abuses and corruptions? Did they not all turn the acuteness of their wit on these externals? By the help of God, my own industry shall be employed in brushing off the tender-bellied grubs from the beautiful plant which I hope to leave behind me flourishing in this wilderness. We Friends are reported to believe too little: yet we believe that God can hear our voices five feet eight inches from the pavement, as easily as with the calves of our legs tucked up against our breech, and leaving us but four feet above-ground.

Peterborough. This is only a childish trick: who would object to it, or care about it?

Penn. It is among those postures and pranks which enable the bustling and authoritative of the place to pick our pockets,

and master us, and hold us down, and scourge us, at their greater convenience. The plainest and simplest things are the wholesomest; mostly of all in religion. Peace and equity are its only ends: if no system in Europe hath yet produced them; it is time to try another; for without them we are not Christians, and but corporeally men.

Peterborough. Some latitude, some dignity, should be allowed to religion in highly civilized nations.

Penn. What would be thy feeling, if a simple beauty were introduced at court in silks and flounces and rubies, and spoke the first sentence in her own plain homely dialect, the second in the conventional language of the palace? Surely the maiden would lose thereby much of her loveliness in thy sight, even though thy passions had been engaged: how much more then must Christianity lose in the like condition, when the passions are very far indeed from any engagement in her behalf!

Peterborough. I cannot answer that satisfactorily: and can you answer me any more so, when I ask whether you do not wander from your own principles, and from the command of Jesus Christ, in refusing to pay taxes and tithes? Your master says, "Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Penn. He doth; and we obey Him.

Peterborough. How! by refusing the surrender of tithes and taxes,[44] you obey the gospel, or the higher powers?

Penn. Certainly; the higher powers are God and His eternal justice. After giving up to God all that belongeth to Him, prythee, friend Mordaunt, what remaineth to Cæsar? Verily that broken switch in thy hand, or that foam about thy horse's bridle, would overpay him his right demands. He who delivered the ordinance enabled those to whom He delivered it to understand its import.

Peterborough. It is a pity that every thing in the New Testament is not plain and explicit.

Penn. No pity at all: it is explicit and plain enough for whoever is earnest to emend his life by it. The little that is difficult to comprehend serves to occupy attention and stimulate inquiry. Thou mightest say it would be better still, if everything

[44 The Quakers did not refuse to pay taxes.]

it conveyeth were impressed upon the heart without any book whatever. Not so: the human heart and intellect want exercise and excitement; and the eye is the first organ of meditation, although in the end meditation is abstracted from the visual sense, and every other. Many are no less mistaken in an opposite judgment on the New Testament, and imagine there is more philosophy in abstruser volumes. Such volumes being merely didactic should be clearer, more systematic, more explanatory. If the authors could have rendered them so, they would have done it; just as the maker of glass would have made it whiter. Nothing is easier to men of genius, nothing more certainly a proof and part of it, than to compose what raises men's wonder and admiration: nothing more difficult than to show them distinctly the simplest and most obvious truth. They can no better see or comprehend it than they can see or comprehend the air, until thou hast quickened their sight by purifying their affections. During this operation they will call thee pedant or enthusiast, and throw perhaps some heavy book at thy head, bidding thee to read it again and again, and to be modester and wiser. Little as I shall ever be contented with my modesty or my wisdom, I hope to improve and to increase them daily by a patient and kindly intercourse with my fellowmen, and a humble unquestioning obedience to our Heavenly Father. Peace and quiet are, in this happy climate, the unfailing fruits of concession and forbearance; fruits which I hope may be transplanted and husbanded, with all the attention and solicitude they ought to be, in countries where at present they have been but heard of, and with indistinctness and with incredulity.

Thou thyself art inclined, my friend, to doubt and dispute the verities of Revelation. I shall not argue with thee on the tenets of any particular sect, nor speak in my own person, nor according to my own belief, but generally and loosely, and as an indifferent man might reason when a scheme was laid before him for the improvement and emolument of his kind. Something of fear, thou wilt acknowledge, is requisite for the coercion of the ungenerous and unjust: something of hope, something of promise, something of security, for the beneficent and righteous, for the afflicted and oppressed. Thou thinkest thou art doing no wrong in removing the foundations of hope: to think it is a folly; to do it is a robbery.

Peterborough. In what way a robbery? Come, tell me; for you stopped to expect my question.

Penn. Hope is the best of possessions.

Peterborough. Of possessions truly!

Penn. Ay, that it is. The provident rear it early in their bosoms; and the improvident, when every thing else is squandered, cling at it to the last.

If we find a few stubborn texts of Holy Scripture that would exclude many good men from their rewards, we may reasonably think them the dreams of hot enthusiasts, exhausted by their aspirations and distempered by their zeal. We should more wisely turn to the words of the teacher than to the glosses of the interpreter, and press toward him through the clouds that surround him, in which alone is darkness and dismay; for his countenance is irradiated, his speech is simple, in his voice is confidence, and in his mein is peace. Why wouldst thou push men away from him, even if thou wert persuaded that he has nothing for them? They are better by trying to merit it, and happier by continuing to expect it. Neither of us can say to a certainty that it is unattainable: on the contrary, the means we are assured are not difficult, and the mediator is not repulsive. There may be folly in most religions, and if thou wilt in all; but the greatest of folly is to hinder men from happiness, to render them turbulent, disorderly, lawless, desperate.

Peterborough. Certainly it is wiser, when you have broken their bones, to tell them that they may pick them up again and case them better hereafter.[45]

Penn. Oppression and injustice are not wanted to make the promises of a man's own heart acceptable to him, and to expand his breast with joy and gladness at the responses given to him (as he believes they are) from above. These he may have without purchasing, and without going to seek them at another's door.

If commerce itself is generally bad and iniquitous when it falls into the hands of a company, what is religion? At first a craft, and afterward a cheat.

[45 First ed. reads: "hereafter; that is, if they will but hold their tongues about it, or employ them in praising the Lord for His loving mercies. *Penn.* Oppression and injustice . . . from above. *Peterborough.* If commerce . . . what is religion? This is now a craft. *Penn.* Woe! woe! &c.,"]

Woe! woe! to those who make it one; woe! woe! to those who enter into it—

Peterborough. Without a patron in the chancellor, or a friend in the huntsmen of the squire.

Penn. Thy light spirits will one day carry thee into the wilderness, and there leave thee sore smitten and without strength. Unworthiness! thou laughest at men's wrongs.

Peterborough. Because men are made now as they were made formerly, and yet bear them. Such being the fact, I think I have esteem enough for them in ranging them with my other instruments, lead and iron.

Penn. Great God! the proud themselves decry and detest the oppressor, while only the powerless pity the oppressed.

Peterborough. Nations are to be commiserated for few other evils than what the elements cast among them; such as famine and pestilence. A quiver of arrows, well directed by half-a-dozen boys, would remove in a single hour the heaviest that philosophers and patriots have tugged against for ages. Injuries[46] grow up quickly and rankly under impunity. I do not deliver such an opinion because I have acted on it; for I may say to you in confidence that I often have forgiven injustice done against me, not indeed to bring a Christian spirit on the parade, but for the satisfaction I feel in the consciousness of superiority, and in the intensity of contempt. It was wrong to gratify my humor at the expense of society, as I have frequently; and the only counterbalance is to serve society at my own peril and loss: and this, as you must acknowledge, hath been my conduct in regard to King James. It is just and necessary to shake a salutary fear into the breasts of insolent stupid despots, when they shake an unsalutary one into thousands who, without such nuisances, would be brave and free. Whoever lets a prince escape him, after suffering an act of arbitrary power, neglects his duty to himself and others; and neglects it from the worst motive,—indifference to public security and private honor. Never let me hear that it is no easy matter to accomplish. I have only one reply; and an obvious one is it: that it may be no easy matter to catch or poison a rat at the time of its depredation; but, let traps and arsenic be always in its way, and finally you are certain of success. Here indeed

[64 From "injuries" to "tragedy" (38 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

you may more justly censure me as cruel; for these poor creatures do us little harm comparatively, and consume what is as much theirs as ours, and what they are guided by instinct to partake with us. But animals without hearts are not directed by Nature or Providence to consume the hearts of others, and the most generous with the most voracity. These now and then recoil, swell against and overpower them.

Penn. Hold! hold! less animation and heat, I do beseech thee! "Vengeance is mine," saith the Lord.

Peterborough. We cannot do better than imitate Him on it, when we find Him ready to help us.

Penn. By long and patient endurance thou mayest make unrighteous princes ashamed.

Peterborough. You may make a dog ashamed by looking him fixedly in the face! You can only make a prince afraid by it: and if you do, and nothing more, he hangs you. We never play the farce before the tragedy.

Penn. I[47] am slow and reluctant to admit what I am afraid must be admitted; that certain plagues, like certain weeds, ought to be cut down rapidly three or four times in the season: this alone kills them. Happy the land where such cutting down can be avoided!

Peterborough. And[48] where it cannot be, your Friends will supply neither hatchet nor rope. The better your institutions are, and the purer your religion and morality, the less likelihood is there that your numbers will increase. Want indeed may compel a few to emigrate from England: but what gain you by such colonists as those?

Penn. A pledge; a security. Whoever emigrates from want presents a token that he would rather work than steal, rather help his neighbor than beg. In England a family may often be a curse; in America it will always be a blessing. In England a child brings with it poverty in most instances; in America wealth.

Peterborough. In England they are swamps and bushes; in America ploughs and oxen: ay, Penn?

Penn. Without them, and in greater proportion than the

[47 From "I" to "that" (2 lines) added in 2nd ed.]
[48 From "And" to "rope" (2 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

luxuries of England can afford, our ploughs would rot, our oxen run wild. Wherever I see a child before me in America, I fancy I see a fresh opening in the wilderness, and in this opening a servant of God appointed to comfort and guide me, ready to sit by me when my eyes grow dim, and able to sustain me when my feet are weary. Look forward, and behold the children of that child. Few generations are requisite to throw upon their hinges the heavily-barred portals of the vast continent behind us. Thy horse appeared to scent by instinct the high-road across it; and thy heart, Mordaunt, panted with prescience to pass the barrier, which the tyrant and his fool would tell thee Nature hath interposed. Who knows but a century or two hence we may look down together on those who are journeying, in this newly-traced road, toward the cities and marts of California, and who are delayed upon it by meeting the Spaniards driven in troops from Mexico?

Peterborough. You began with a dream, you are ending with a vision.

Penn. Every thing good hath been ever called so: my answer is, past events shadow out future ones.

Peterborough. We move in the midst of these shadows, but discern not their forms and tendencies.

Penn. Perfectly we do not discern them: nevertheless, from the invariable practice of hereditary potentates to abuse and arrogate power, and from the spirit of agricultural States in their adolescence, and from the vantage-ground whereon that spirit stands when it settles but to soar away, he who is not an idiot must be a prophet.

First the brutes possessed the earth; afterward they and men contended for it, and held it equally; by degrees men acquired the ascendency; lastly, as the monsters were thinned and scattered, men contrived to raise up artificial ones, covering them with furs and hair, and admiring their truculent looks and flaring colors. These creatures, like the pig-enactor in the fable, did bravelier than those they represented, and allowed no better than a precarious and merely animal existence to their fanciful dressers and complacent fosterers. It was not the tree of folly that

> Brought death into the world and all our woe;

it was the tree of wisdom. As this apologue is liable to many interpretations, it may admit mine among the rest.

Peterborough. Let me hear it: a fable is sometimes a refreshment.

Penn. Mine is, that neither the ignorance nor the passions of mankind are immediately and of themselves the causes of their corruption and wretchedness, but the uses and ends to which they have been converted by the warier.

Peterborough. I[49] think so, too; and, although our creeds are not quite homogeneous, one thing peculiarly pleases me in your religious doctrines.

Penn. I rejoice to hear it: say which.

Peterborough. You pay nothing for them.

Penn. To suppose that we want hirelings to teach us our duties is to suppose that our fathers and mothers have given bad examples and appointed bad executors. Taking a different view of the subject, holiness, you may tell me, hath little weight with most people. I know it: but every man who wishes to leave his children either rich or respectable will provide that they first acquire from him what shall preserve their riches and promote their respectability; that is, frugal habits and civil demeanour. Quarrels for tithes and appointed prayers imperfectly serve the purpose. They supersede those endeavors which would be made for every man's own interest, in every man's own house; not perhaps by psalms and sermons, but by exhortations and examples.

Peterborough. There is something grand and imposing in our hierarchy.

Penn. Troth is there! and more than enough of both: yet there was nothing grand or imposing in Christ and His successors, who gained more proselytes than your hierarchal folks lose.

Grandeur is what the eye makes it. For my part, I see nothing grand in frocks and flounces; I see nothing grand in a fellow who wears one shirt next his skin and another over his coat. I find in your church

Luxuriam spoliorum et censum in damna furentem,

[49 From "I" to "homogeneous" (2 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

as the pagan poet hath it; and we brethren are convinced that it not only is no help or assistance to true piety, but that it torpifies and impedes it. I speak of its effect on the whole; not on one individual, one family, or one parish. Moreover we think, and can prove by figures, that its revenues are more than sufficient to maintain an army (since armies you will maintain) of such strength as should repel the most obstinate aggression. This is not always to be expected: suppose then that warfare shall exist among us, even when we grow wiser, one year in three; the other two years' income might be applied to the education of the poor: shortly, it would leave none in that predicament. We demonstrate in our society the practicability of the thing without any such abundant means at our disposal, and suffering under the aggravation of war-taxes as may happen, and church-taxes as must befall us irremissibly.

Peterborough. In this you have done admirably, divinely.

Religions are calculated for climates. Popery is lax enough for the warmest. Its modification in the Church of England, stiff but elastic, serves best for the variable atmosphere it was composed in. Yours is the most judicious where there is a trade in beavers; the thornier and rigider Calvinism takes root and flourishes under the Alps and Ben-Lomond. I[50] could dandle the pretty baby of Catholicism, with its whistle and bells and coral and flounces about it; but in regard to the capricious and ferocious Tiger-God, that looks at it with such growls, I think it prudent to stand on this side of the grating.

Penn. Governors, who are the gainers, will allow any creed, provided the people pay them regularly and ask no questions. Calvinism is the product of cold and gloomy countries; and, such countries being likewise poor, nobody is at the trouble to extirpate it out of them, if the natives will but abstain from leagues and covenants. Let it however sprout up for a season in any rich soil and sunny exposure, and thou shalt find dragoons turned into the field against it with such hoes and harrows as the like husbandmen use most expertly. Languedoc has witnessed this. The Catholic priest himself is less intolerant than one might imagine; and it is not the reprobate creed that troubleth his slumbers: it is the new-fangled bolt wrapped up in it, made on purpose for the apartment

[50 From "I" to "grating" (5 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

of thy daughter. An accursed creed! it turneth him out of more dormitories than were contained in the palace of Priam, and strippeth from him the supervisorship of more kitchen-stoves than smoked for Elagabalus. With one foot upon thy bed and the other upon thy belly, he fancied thee fairly his; and now he thinks the Devil must be in thee if thou hast turned thy back against him. He curses thee, kicks thee, and leaves thee to that *Evil One's* disposal.

Peterborough. I am not sordid nor avaricious; yet, in my opinion, the worst of the matter is the money we are obliged to contribute, although we have no appetite for the ordinary. Those who receive the best education, and who want no new instruction, pay the most; those who, being seceders, decline the doctrine and follow another, pay for both, and perhaps thrice as much for that which they reject as for that which they cherish. This in another age or two will be incredible, at least in England and in America.

There are two reasons, however, why I never could become a member of your society: first, I never should be quiet or good enough; secondly, supposing me to have acquired all the tranquillity and virtue requisite, my propensity toward the theatre and its fair actresses[51] would seduce me.

Penn. Thy language is light and inconsequent. Thou couldst not indeed be quiet and good enough for any rational and sedate society, and oughtest not even to discourse with any confidence on virtue, unless thou hadst first subdued such an idle fantasy as that of mockery, and such vile affections as those for paint and fiddles, and wind-instruments and female ones.

Peterborough. They who are to live in the world must see what the world is composed of,—its better and its worse.

Penn. No doubt, he who is to live in a street must see the

[[51] In 1722, Peterborough married for the second time. His wife was Anastasia Robinson, the famous singer. Though she was both beautiful and virtuous, he shrank from declaring the marriage until the year 1735; and then performed the duty in a fashion conforming "with his general view that everything affecting him was matter of historical interest." Mr Stebbing's "Peterborough," p. 219. For Penn's opinion of stage-plays, *see* "No Cross, no Crown," c. xv.]

cleaner parts of the pavement and the dirtier; but must he put his foot into them equally, or, according to thy system, step over the plain flagstone to splash into the filth?

Peterborough. Philosophers tell us our passions and follies should be displayed to us together with their evil consequences, that we may regulate and control them.

Penn. In my opinion, who am no philosopher, we should grow as little familiar even with their faces as may be. We ought to have nothing to do with such as are exhibited on the tragic stage; if they really exist, they are placed by Providence out of our range: they cannot hurt us unless we run after them on purpose. Then do we want strange characters of less dimensions, such as can come under our doorway and affect us at home? We meet them everywhere; nay, we cannot help it.

Peterborough. Elevated sentiment is found in tragedy; elegant reproof in comedy.

Penn. Comedy is the aliment of childish malice; tragedy of malice full-grown. Comedy has made many fools, and tragedy many criminals. Show me one man who hath been the wiser or the better for either, and I will show you twenty who have been made rogues and coxcombs by aping the only models of fashion they can find admittance to, and as many more who have grown indifferent and hard-hearted, and whatever else is reprehensible in higher life.

Who, being thoughtless, ignorant, self-sufficient, would not be moody, vindictive, unforgiving, if great monarchs set the example before him? and who fears those chastisements at the end, which it would be a thousand times more difficult for him to run into than to avoid? There is only one thing in either kind of scenic representation which is sure enough never to hit him; the moral.

If, however, thou visitest the theatre for reflection, thou art the first that ever went there for it, although not the first that found it there. Reflection, from whatever quarry extracted, is the foundation of solid pleasures, which foundation, we think, cannot be laid too early in the season.

Peterborough. Solid pleasures, like other solid things, grow heavy and tiresome: I would rather have three or four lighter, of half the value, readily taken up, and as readily laid down again.

Penn. The time will come, young man, when thou wilt reason better, and wilt detest that wit, the rivet of sad consistency. Thou hast spoken, as thou fanciest, a smart and lively thing; and, because thou hast spoken it, thou wilt tie thy body and soul to it.

Peterborough. Possibly the time may come, but it lies beyond my calculation, when the frame of my mind may be better adapted to those cubic joys you were proposing for me; but I have observed that all who in their youthful days are the well-strapped, even-paced porters of them have been the first broken down by calamity or infirmity.

Penn. The greater sign of infirmity, the greater of calamity, is there apparent, where the intertexture of pleasures and duties seems intractable.

Peterborough. If the theatre were as hostile and rancorous against the church as the church in some countries is against the theatre, we should call it very immoral; not because it had less justice on its side, but because it had more virulence. Splendor and processions and declamation and rodomontade are high delights to the multitude. Accompanied by lofty and generous sentiments, they do good; accompanied by merriment and amusement, they do more good still: for lofty and generous sentiments are so ill-fitted to the heads and hearts of most men, that they fall off in getting through the crowd in the lobby; but the amusement and merriment go to bed with man and wife, and something of them is left for the children the next morning at breakfast. I have no greater objection to parade and stateliness in that theatre where the actors have been educated at the university, than in that where one can more easily be admitted behind the scenes: what I want is a little good-nature and good-manners, and that God should be thought as tolerant as my lord chamberlain.

The worst objection I myself could ever find against the theatre is, that I lose in it my original idea of such men as Cæsar and Coriolanus, and, where the loss affects me more deeply, of Juliet and Desdemona. Alexander was a fool to wish for a second world to conquer: but no man is a fool who wishes for the enjoyment of two; the real and ideal: nor is it any thing short of a misfortune, I had almost said of a calamity, to confound them. This is done by the stage: it is likewise done by engravings in books,

which have a great effect in weakening the imagination, and are serviceable only to those who have none, and who read negligently and idly. I should be sorry if the most ingenious print in the world were to cover the first impression left on my mind of such characters as Don Quixote and Sancho: yet probably a very indifferent one might do it; for we cannot master our fancies, nor give them at will a greater or less tenacity,[52] a greater or less promptitude in coming and recurring.

You Friends are no less adverse to representations by painting than by acting.

Penn. We do not educate our youth to such professions and practices. Thou, I conceive, art unconcerned and disinterested in this matter.

Peterborough. Nearly, but not quite. I am ignorant of the art, and prefer that branch of it which to many seems the lowest; I mean portraiture. I can find flowers in my garden, landscapes in my rides, the works of saints in the Bible, of great Statesmen and great captains in the historians, and of those who with equal advantages had been the same in the *Newgate Calendar*. The best representation of them can only give me a high opinion of the painter's abilities, fixed on a point of time. But when I look on a family-picture by Vandyke; when I contemplate the elegant and happy father in the midst of his blooming progeny, and the partner of his fortunes and his joys beside him,—I am affected very differently, and much more. He who there stands meditating for them some delightful scheme of pleasure or aggrandizement has bowed his head to calamity, perhaps even to the block. Those roses gathered from the parterre behind, those taper fingers negligently holding them, that hair the softness of which seems unable to support the riot of its ringlets, are moved away from earth amid the tears and aching hearts of the very boys and girls who again are looking at me with such unconcern.

Faithfullest recorder of domestic bliss, perpetuator of youth

[52 First ed. has in a footnote—"In my youth I was fond of reading the Nouvelle Héloïse, and purchased a fine edition of Rousseau's works in which were engravings. Opening the Nouvelle Héloïse, my eyes fell upon one of them; and never afterward have I looked into the book, which I instantly closed with more sorrow than ever merchant did his ledger, when he found an insuperable balance against him."].

and beauty, vanquisher of time, leading in triumph the Hours and Seasons, the painter here bestows on me the richest treasures of his enchanting art.

Penn. Vanity! vanity! vanity! as thou hast proved. The fine arts, as you call them, have always been the attractive clothing of a venal religion. Ours is none such, and needs no such lures. Come away: let us leave the vain, and look once again at the grasping. Religion ought no more to be forced on us for payment, than soap and candles.

The first property was a portion set apart for the gods; that is for the conjurers or priests. Shortly, those who decided on subjects of litigation took presents for their good offices, and by degrees claimed rewards. Hence originated two classes or professions, which have absorbed in the course of ages more by many times than the fee-simple of the whole cultivated earth. They are contrary to Christianity, and subversive of it.

Peterborough. I know enough of both to see this. Here, indeed, you stand beyond controversy.

Penn. Friend, whenever thou hearest it said, as thou often must do, that there is some excellent sense in this man or the other, thou mayest always find it in strict correspondence with the preconceived opinions of the sage observer: and where the author or speaker is wrong, he is wrong exactly where he would set his reader or hearer right, and cannot. If we are weak in proportion to our failures, the best intellects, as ye would call them, are the feeblest of all: for the most rational advice has the fewest followers, the plainest reasoning the most obstinate opposers. We have no right to be angry or vexed at any such disappointment. When a wise man cannot make an unwise one better, shall he therefore let the unwise one make him worse? Shall the weak, while he holdeth pertinaciously to his ignorance, snatch away temper and discretion from the strong?

Peterborough. Argumentative enough: but the business is to remove those insects, which, deriving their sustenance from the juices of the State, take its color and seem its substance.

Penn. Our society, although it be extinguished, and although its extinction be as early even as thou prognosticatest, will at least leave behind it the remembrance that it marched foremost of the vanguard, and opposed those inveterate, unrelenting pestilences in

the spirit of justice and in the gentleness of consistency. That communities, in their most depraved and rotten state, stand more upright without them is plain and evident: in regard to one, from the practice of your judges, who, whenever a case of property is most difficult and delicate, recommend it to the arbitration of friends; in regard to the other, from the manifestation of more quietude, regularity, and happiness in those who have seceded from the toilet, the feast, and the theatre of a city-bred, court-aping religion into their own family party, their private, sheltered walks and noiseless, untrampled grass-plots. I do not calculate here on worldly loss and profit. I do not demonstrate to thee, as I might do in figures, that, after government hath fairly done its worst, a fifth of every man's remaining goods and chattels are piled up and swept away; and we are at last so pressed and elbowed, so jostled and trodden on, between the bar and the pulpit, while we clap our hands to our seals our pockets are slit to the very bottom, with little care or concern for the skin under; and, if we cry out, there is always a hand in readiness to stop our mouths, and to stifle and strangulate such as would resist. Where the lawyers flourish, there is a certain sign that the laws do not: for this flourishing can only arise from the perplexity or the violation of them.[53] If an English lawyer is in danger of starving in a market-town or village, he invites another, and both thrive. Hence, though litigation is their business, they usually are courteous one to another, whenever and for whatever purposes they meet: on the same principle of abstinence as is displayed by vultures, which, however hungry and strangers, do not attack the stronger the weaker, but, sullenly concentrated, await in calm providence the weltering breeze laden with glad tidings of pestilence or of battle. What is more wonderful and inexplicable to a man who thinks on it, than that, after many hundred years of the same government,—and this government called a good one, a wise one, an example to others,—some new statute should be deemed requisite every week? When children break their toys and cry for fresh ones, we attend to them only because they are children: when men break those bonds which hold them together,

[53 In the first ed. there is a long footnote giving an account of Landor's lawsuit against his tenant Betham, and his experience of the law's delay in that matter. *See* Mr Forster's "Life," p. 173, seq.]

and, as often as the gravest of them assemble, want some of another color and quality, we give them honorable names for it, instead of scourging and sending them supperless to bed. I fear, my friend, that laws are contrived rather to increase the fortunes of the few than to secure those of the many. The makers and menders of them do a great deal of work in a little time; and have hardly put into their pockets the money for it, when our victuals drop out of some unsoldered chink into the fire, and the same tinkers must hammer, and the same payers must pay, again.*

Peterborough. English law, like the torpedo, kills only those who have no metal to put between it and them. It does not appear that God will ever let the world rest, without one or more of His curses on it. When the rattle-snakes and alligators are exterminated in this country, barristers and attorneys may shoot up.

Penn. Our Maker's plagues upon wealth and avarice!—but the religion we profess will never allow such a dreadful scourge to infest our people.

Peterborough. Our English Themis, venerable for her paunch, and glorious in the rich array of native carbuncles, makes her scales of gold, her weights of rubies.

Penn. Truly doth she, and rubies concreted from the heart-blood of the people in her cranks and crevices. If, after what goes among the lawyers, the English are to pay a tenth to the clergy, and a tenth to the civil power in taxes, they, on the score of property, derive no advantages whatever from the social state. For, supposing the whole island to be as much over-run by robbers as any part of the globe ever was, you cannot yet suppose that these robbers could take to themselves a fifth of all property, immovable and movable. Districts the most infested by them would suffer in a much less degree than this: and common-sense and common interest would unite the population, however rude and scattered, however timorous and abject, against such despoilers. The most exposed to their outrages would be exposed to less

* General Bathurst, examined before a committee of the Commons on the country rates, stated that poor persons were recommended by their solicitors to plead guilty to avoid the fees: the fee for an acquittal in the Western Circuit being one pound six shillings and eight-pence.

ruinous demands; and these demands themselves would soon cease: whereas there is no appearance that those heavier ones under which our mother country labors will have any other termination than such as our peaceful habits and humane religion teach us to deprecate and avoid.

Tithes, according to the practice of the Anglo-Saxon and British Church, never were intended for the priest alone; but, beside the maintenance of the clergymen, for the repairs of the church, for the relief of the poor, and for the entertainment of the pilgrim and stranger. Thus we cannot suppose that more than a third of them went to the parson; particularly as the distribution was left to the bishop and his assistants. The tithes of a whole diocese were collected, and as the duties in each parish were the same, so the stipends of the ministers were equal. Men in those days fled from the sword to the church; in these we flee from the church to the wilderness: a longer flight indeed, but a safer refuge. Value the life of every man, in possession of goods, at ten years' purchase; he pays two years' income to be allowed the other eight: and on what security? How does he know that the *posse curiæ* may not encroach as deeply on the rest? Can any wise man endure this state of things with the power of avoiding it? any brave man with the power of overturning it?

Peterborough. Faith! no. But we always are either staggering drunk with war, or fast asleep with peace.

Penn. Here in Pennsylvania, those who guide us are chosen by us for our guides; those who protect us are chosen by us for our protectors. We do not ask favors from them; we do not solicit that a portion of our own be thrown back to us, like the entrails of a beast to the dogs that have been chasing it; we do not stipulate that one of our sons may have, openly or secretly, a part of what his brothers and cousins, and many houses round, have contributed. Our agents cannot form themselves into gangs against us; cannot board our vessels, burn our plantations of tobacco, enter our houses, break open our cellars, cast out the materials of our beverage, whip us into their worship, or fine and imprison us for neglecting to attend it.

Peterborough. You lay rather too much stress upon what

you call liberty of conscience, and are inconsistent in hating King James for having too much enlarged it. In fact, all people in all countries may worship what objects they please, if they will only be contented to keep within doors. But even the quietest love display and dominion in worship. Political freedom is more material.

Penn. Be it as thou sayest. According to the clearest, simplest, best definition, the office and nature of Justice is to give every one his due. Now, under kingly government, a man not only hath not his due, but hath not the means or even the chance of obtaining it. Those who are most intimately acquainted with his abilities and his virtues are without the power of placing them where they shall be serviceable to the community. He withers with his fruit upon his branches: and the sycophant, sunned in idleness and vacuity, points at him as a *lusus naturæ*.

Peterborough. If the world were not composed of opposites, and if the actions of men were not in eternal contravention to their reasonings, I should have imagined that the peaceful manners of your people, and your abstinence from resisting not only against authority but even against wrong, would have rendered you more favorable to monarchy than to republicanism.

Penn. Although we resist not against wrong, we may like right better.

Peterborough. Quiet is the principle of your institution, the rules of your lives and thoughts: now nothing is further from it than the spirit of democracy; as we may clearly see in the democratical portion of our constitution at home. Go, at the time of an election, to some borough unbiassed by aristocratical influence and ministerial seduction: you will not find the wisest or most upright of its burgesses in the chair; but either a stranger from a distance or an intriguer in the town. And not only the rabble are his partisans: the better sort, as they are called, lean toward him, rather than toward one whose shadow chills them, whose genius is a sting and whose grandeur of soul a reproof to them. Newton,[54] Milton, and Shakspeare would never have been proposed or thought of

[54] First ed. reads: "Newton and Locke, Milton," &c.]

in any borough where they might happen to be born, supposing them likewise to have received the requisites of fortune. Had they offered themselves, they would have been told, "We do not want men of books or genius, but men of business:" as if men of genius are not men of business in the higher sense of the word; of business in which the State and society are implicated for ages.

Common minds revolve these reasonings about them. Let them be contented with the prospect of their future glory; let us be, with the certainty of never being heard of hereafter: which saves us a great deal of concern, and allows us a perfect freedom of action.

Penn. Thou reasonest well, and from observation. Thy arguments are the surest proof I could adduce, that a sounder morality and a purer religion are necessary to guide the inconsiderateness of those whom thou callest (I wish the word were gentler) the *rabble*, and to mollify the malignity of (here too the expression is susceptible of improvement) the *better sort*.

Institutions cannot make men perfect. Fraud, injury, violence, may be discountenanced and diminished if thou removest those whose authority began upon them, rests upon them, and must go upon them. Keep thy fellow-creatures temperate, keep them sane, strong, tractable, by early and late discipline; speak mildly to the obedient; more mildly to the refractory: and on one side of thee thou wilt soon find friendship in the bonds of peace, and violence on the other self-disarmed.

Peterborough. We should imagine, if we did not much reflect on the subject, that equality is a very natural sentiment; yet there is none to which nearly the universality of mankind is constantly so averse. Bring before you the whole train of your acquaintance of all ages, tempers, and conditions, and you will acknowledge at once the justice of my remark. I have observed among the peers whom I was accustomed to meet at my father's and uncle's, that they invariably bear toward one another a constrained familiarity or a frigid courtesy; while to their huntsmen and their prickers, to their chaplains and their cooks, or indeed another man's, they display unequivocal signs of ingenuous cordiality. Baronets are prouder than anything we see on this side of the Dardanelles, excepting the proctors of universities and

the vergers of cathedrals; and their pride is kept in eternal agitation, both from what is above them and from what is below. Gentlemen of any standing are apt to investigate their claims a little too minutely; and nobility has neither bench nor joint-stool for them in the vestibule. During the whole course of your life, have you ever seen one, among this our King James's breed, that either did not curl himself up and lie snug and warm in the lowest company, or slaver and whimper in fretful quest of the highest?

Penn. Without any disposition to answer what never engaged a moment of my attention, let me suggest to thee that, whether thy remark be well or ill founded, the desire of equality is not the less nurtured by reason or the less approved by Christianity. Mankind is certainly quite as averse to patience, to forbearance, to returning good on receiving evil; still I never heard of the preacher who discountenanced the recommendation of them.

Peterborough. I mean only to show you that, founded upon abstract principles, your society cannot last long.

Penn. Not among the meal and tallow that breed the grubs thou hast thrown out before me: I know it. But, friend Mordaunt, there are sieves and ventilators in the world, and there will always be people who know alike how to make and where to exercise them.

Peterborough. Men can only be kept in concord by their vanity; which, weak as you may call it, is the strongest and most sensitive nerve in the human heart. If you will not let them be unjust, nay, if you will not be unjust toward the greater part of them, this greater part itself will scorn you. Nothing would raise such violent and such general discontent, as giving to every man his due.

Penn. Such, alas, is the world! May we not improve it?

Peterborough. May you not turn wolves into fawns, thistles into wheat, granite into peas and clover? Try this first.

Penn. By the help of God I will undertake the other experiment. If I am to raise discontent, be it on this foundation! If men are to scorn me, be it for this offence!

Peterborough. The object of your institution is to establish universal peace on universal equality. I do not assert that equality, inasmuch as relates to rights, is impracticable,—which

many have done too rashly,—but I doubt its extent; I doubt its durability. Beside, since violence is the thing most hateful to you, I must remind you again and again that republics are usually more turbulent than monarchies.

Penn. The mother who gives her own milk to her infant hath often more trouble to make him quiet, than a boon-companion hath, twenty years afterward, to make him drunk; and may seem severer to the dissolute. Monarchy lets the wood run wild; lets swamps extend through it, and reptiles infest it: this is her easiness, this is her providence, this is the blessing she imparts. If in a republic thou tracest the mark of the waggon-wheel and of the hatchet, do not suddenly set it down among the certainties that they were brought in for devastation. Look round a little: see whether the plants are not the larger and the loftier and the healthier for letting in air and light; whether the grass cannot grow under them for pasture, whether the alleys are not useful for the exportation and importation of what is profitable, and whether they do not enable the proprietor to watch that "no thieves break in and steal."

Teach people to rule themselves, and they will neither bear violence nor inflict it.

Something of consistency, one would desire, should appertain to those discreet and regular men who uphold the government of hereditary kings, unanswerable for their misdemeanors, both as the most lawful and the most convenient. If the gardener had pruned thy fruit-trees improperly, wouldst not thou admonish him or dismiss him?

Peterborough. Certainly.

Penn. Thou thinkest it equitable and expedient?

Peterborough. Beyond a doubt.

Penn. If he seized thee by the throat for it, and protested he would hang thee, calling it atrocious, and insisting that only the Devil could have instigated thee?

Peterborough. I would trip up the knave's heels, and cudgel him soundly.

Penn. There are those peradventure who would incline to say that he deserved no better at thy hands. Howbeit, suppose he should struggle and prevail against thee, and asseverate that not only he himself would continue to manage thy fruit-trees

as beliked him, but that furthermore his son and grandson should do likewise, whether they had acquired a knowledge of horticulture or not; for that, as his father had been thy father's gardener, it was undeniable that he ought to be thine, and his elder son thy elder son's: waiving which argument, haply he would throw up a worm in thy face, and inform thee triumphantly that, if antecedently no fitness or reason had existed, yet both reason and fitness sprang up full-grown when he overthrew and smote thee.

Peterborough. Famous illustration.

Penn. Sneer not at what prelacy holds the most pertinaciously of her doctrines, and what, if thou wilt not swallow it from the pulpit, thou must gulp from the drum-head. Nay, Mordaunt, with all thy pride, impetuosity, and disdain, thou, even thou, art the liveryman of this gardener: yea, thou who wert indignant to be designated as his master. Inconsistent creature!

Peterborough. It is something to have an influence on the fortunes of mankind: it is greatly more to have an influence on their intellects. Such is the difference between men of office and men of genius; between computed and uncomputed rank.

Penn. Thou art not among those who place Fortune above Nature, and the weakest work of the weakest mortals above the greatest work of Deity in his omnipotence. It is generous in thee to acknowledge what it would be expected from thee to deny, if thou wert not higher than a garter could lift thee.

Peterborough. I should be as mean as a man of fashion if I disallowed it, and as silly as a president of the council if I attempted to dissemble it. Only the first personage in the kingdom should be unenlightened and void, as only the first page in a book should be a blank one. It is when it is torn out that we come at once to the letters.

Your complimentary terms shall not preclude me from an attack on you, now we are away from your garden and gardener. You also in manners and regimen have your inconsistencies.

Penn. Let us correct them; we can do it, and are ready: what are they?

Peterborough. I am not captious by nature, nor over-nice.

Penn. Thou beginnest well.

Peterborough. Really, I am almost ashamed to take exceptions at mere words.

Penn. Better and better!

Peterborough. I will not spare you then. On my conscience, I do not see why your people, in reality so sincere, should use expressions in which there is no sincerity. *Friend*, on all occasions, is an abuse. A friend is a creature now extinct: we read of its petrified bones in distant regions; and those who would represent its figure in their persons resemble it only in its petrifaction.

Penn. We call every man our friend, because we wish to be every man's. Thou hast not found friendship in certain places, because thou wert looking for something else. Take virtue with thee, and thou wilt either find it or not want it. Here[55] thou art as unfair with us as thou wert on excommunication, of which I will now explain to thee our employment.

We admonish our younger brethren to omit no opportunity of pouring their ill actions and ill thoughts into quieter and more capacious minds, wherein the swells of their sorrows and the irregularities of their other affections may subside and sweeten. This practice remains with them through life. I see no similitude in it to that of the papist, when all the confidence a young man places in his father, and a young woman in her mother, is considered by the priest as not among the duties of life, unless both of them come before him and submit the tenderer and purer mind to his hardened and intrusive touch. He tells them such confession, and such only, is necessary to their happiness in a future state. God, he says, accepts it not as a merit but as an atonement: those who have been injured may be passed aside; he himself acts for these without seeing them, without communicating with them, without making them reparation, without rendering them account.

Peterborough. There are creatures brought from other countries, as these priests were, and exhibited in fairs and markets and festivals (and wherever men and money are idly tossed about), as these priests are, which superintend each other's polls with much care and cunning, as these priests do, and pick

[55] From "Here" to "employment" (3 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

out from them and put between their grinders the minute generations of incommodious things springing up innumerably from pruriency and scurf. What thinkest thou? Thinkest thou that these animals, the bigger or the smaller, do the same for cleanliness? No; they do it for eating, as these priests do.

Penn. Inconveniences there may be in our manners, but not to us: inconsistencies there may be in our government, but not ours are those. In this country, where we are left to ourselves, we reconcile them gradually or remove them peaceably.

Peterborough. If they were serious, and in your native country, you would find your religious scruples an impediment to every such exertion.

Penn. Thy indifference to modes of worship and to articles of faith is founded on the principle, I suppose, that a virtuous man will be virtuous in any of them.

Peterborough. Unquestionably.

Penn. What maketh him virtuous?

Peterborough. His inclination: the current and quality of his blood.

Penn. Hast thou reflected so little as not to know that inclinations are given by discipline and habit; and that the quality and current of the blood are as much to be modified by indulgence or coercion, as they are by pepper or hemlock? I would never try to arouse thy soul from the only state of languor it is subject to, did not this indifference to externals, as thou callest them, cover in almost every breast (and might hereafter in thine) an equal indifference to what lies deeper. But, the thing being so, rise from thy apathy, from thy lethargic trance, if true courage or even if false be within thee! Away to Piedmont;[56] away to the people of the Valley! Doth the sword charm thee? doth blood thrill thee? or hath it lost its voice with thee when it crieth unto God? Thousands had been cast into infected prisons; yea, seventeen thousands. Winter stepped in between the pestilence and them; and those whom the ice had not fastened to the floor were at last in number three thousand, when it appeared to their prince to be a costly matter, and an offence

[56] See Penn's account of the Waldenses in "No Cross, No Crown," xx., § § 8-23. Landor has given the history of their persecution, which is only generally mentioned in the place cited.]

to the Virgin, to feed any longer these heretics. Scourged from their dungeons, bayoneted from their country, they traverse Geneva; they reach Berne. Not houses nor lands nor brotherly love nor compassion, so sweet a stranger to them, so long unlooked for, could detain them there; nor the only alluring one of interdicted pleasures (for such it had ever been to them), the blessed communion of Christian faith. Their grain was growing yellow on its stalk when they assembled by night in the wood of Nyon. The boldest of human enterprises was undertaken on the sixteenth of the eighth month, in the year of our redemption sixteen hundred and eighty-nine.

I designate the year particularly, although two have not since elapsed, because the existence of these persecuted men appears to be one of those glorious actions which both contemporary and future annalists may overlook. For History is now become as fond as Poetry ever was of the violent and powerful, and much more contemptuous of low condition. She loves better great nations than great actions, great battles than great examples, and is ready to emblazon no name under which she descries no shoulder-knot. Of these holy men pursued like wolves, but never dropping in their flight the ark of true religion, fewer than nine hundred climb the hostile mountains of Savoy. Prudence and Justice guide them in their path: they pay their cruel enemies for every thing needful, out of a pittance insufficient for perhaps another day. Between Suze and Brianson, at the bridge of Salabertrans, they are opposed by two thousand five hundred regular troops, and by a numerous armed peasantry. The bridge is barricaded: a battle of two hours renders them masters of this position. Weary with their conflict, hungered (for now those among them who had money can procure no subsistence with it, the peasantry being in the field against them), they still pursue their march, and attain the summit of the highest mountain on the road.

Why have they fallen on the earth? and wherefore are they praising God? Because they see again the land that nurtured them in the strength of holiness, the rafters (for some were unconsumed) of the churches wherein their parents were united, and the elder-tree in full flower upon their graves. Orchards and gardens had disappeared: flocks there were none, nor any

beast whatever. The villages were to be conquered from the invader: in another day not a trace remained of them, excepting two black lines where the fire had run along. Reduced at last to four hundred combatants, they threw up strong entrenchments, and resisted until winter the repeated assaults of their increasing enemies. Early in the spring an army of twenty two thousand men attacked them, and was repulsed. Eight days afterward, the entrenchment was cannonaded and bombarded, and there was on every side a pertinacious and most desperate assault. This too failed: but as the ill-constructed parapet was laid in ruins, they escaped down the precipices by night, amid the sentinels of the beleaguerer, and posted themselves at some distance in the *Pré du Tour*, a small plain surrounded by the wildest mountains, where their ancestors like themselves had displayed such courage as never was exhibited in any region of the earth, by any other portion of the human race.

Peterborough. Are you not ashamed of being so eloquent?

Penn. I know nothing of oratory: I carry no piece of tape to measure periods; but reflection shows me that the greater part of the most eloquent books that ever were written might with more advantage be cast into the ovens of Paris and London, than placed in the hands of the young and inconsiderate. Philosophy, whatever it may do hereafter, has done little good at present; and History has reserved all her applauses for the destroyers of mankind. Point out to me one single schoolmaster or professor, in any age, who has not applauded the speech of Alexander to Parmenio: that, if he were Parmenio, he would sheathe the sword. Was the man so besotted as not to see clearly that Parmenio spoke in the interests of humanity and in the opinion of all nations, and that he himself spoke not even in his own interests, and directly against the well-being of the world?

Peterborough. What an unfortunate man was Ludlow,[57] not to have been present at the battles of these brave fellows! He left their vicinity just before, and came into England, hoping to end his days among us. I met him in Westminster Abbey the

[57] Landor's authority for this account of Ludlow's return to England is Rapin's "History," iii., 120 (ed. 1751). Macaulay, who had no high opinion of Seymour, does not accuse him of interested motives. It should be mentioned that Seymour was not a Whig, but a Tory.]

morning of that memorable sitting when Sir Edward Seymour, who enjoyed the General's estate at Maiden Bradley, moved the House of Commons for an address to the king, praying that he should be arrested. Whiggism prevailed · and the soundest and sincerest friend of liberty went again into exile for the constancy of his attachment.

I was struck by the manly, calm, unassuming, military air of a robust and fresh-colored man, about seventy years of age, who stood before me with his eyes fixed downward on one spot. Being neither very shy, nor more disposed to balk my curiosity than my other propensities, I bowed to him respectfully, and expressed my persuasion that whoever was interred there merited the sympathies of the nation.

"Young gentleman," answered he mildly, "you do not know, apparently, whose bones have lain here?"

"Certainly not, sir," I replied; "but probably many men's in many ages: for, whatever may be the respect which, in this place above others, is paid to the deceased, it will not ensure to their bones an undisturbed and permanent station."

"If it could," replied he, "surely those of the most prudent, humane, intelligent commander that ever led Englishmen to victory would not have been disinterred."

"The felonious Stuarts and their insatiable jackals," cried I, "prowled after rotten carcasses, and had more stomach to lap congealed blood than to fight for fresher. And there are sycophants yet among us who would excite our commiseration for their chastisement. The same fellows, next week, will be just as loyal and religious in extolling the powers that be."

He seemed neither to notice my expressions nor to partake in my emotion, but, laying his hand gently on my shoulder, said, gravely and tenderly, "Even generous enthusiasm leaves men sometimes ungenerous. We have removed the evil; let us pardon and forget it. Let us imitate, as far as we can, him whom we ought rather to think on than on the Stuarts. We are treading the ground that covered Blake; the man of men."

Roused to higher enthusiasm by his calmness than I could have been by his eloquence, if he had any, I seized him by the hand, and swore by God the eulogy was merited and true.

Penn. And God will forgive thee; for though thou didst (as

many wise men will tell thee) take His name in vain, never was it taken in adjuration less in vain than then. Some admirals have maintained the glory of England; some have increased it: he found it lower than that of Holland, of Spain, or even of France, and raised it by his genius and valor far above them all. The hope is more reasonable that we may never want such men again than that we shall ever see them.

Peterborough. Hold! friend William! With your leave, I will entertain both hopes alike; little as is the probability that, if any admiral shall equal him in the union of nautical skill and moral bravery, the same person will be equally grave, disinterested, dispassionate, humble and tender-hearted. I agree with you that no fighting man was ever at once so great and so good a man as Blake; and since History does not inform us that there has been, Reason does not encourage us to believe that there will be at any time hereafter: but Hope may whisper when these are silent. In all ages, party and self are the prime movers of human action, and never were they more busy than in the whole of his lifetime. Firm as he was in the principles of republicanism, he belonged to no party, and was as far removed from selfishness as from faction. He declined the honors of the State, he avoided the acclaim of popularity, he won battles against calculation, he took treasures above it, he lived frugally, he died poor.

Ludlow was moved by the earnestness of my language and demeanor, and said, gracefully, "Sir! I perceive you are a military man; so was I, while I had any existence as an Englishman."

"How, sir!" exclaimed I.

"They under these stones," continued he, "inherit their place of rest: I come to seek it; and, if rumors are to be trusted, I may fail to find it. Again I behold my beloved country in the enjoyment of peace and freedom. Much of my property, most of my days, all of my thoughts, designs, and labors have been devoted to the consummation of this one event. How gladly have I bestowed them! how gladly shall I bestow the remainder! To see the country I have served by my life and writings is an ample recompense for any service I could render her, and almost comforts me under the privation of friends, associates, and comrades swept away by the storm that split our island and convulsed all Europe."

An old beadle at this moment twitched me by the skirt of my coat and drew me aside. "Have a care," said he, in a tremulous voice; "that is old Ludlow. The Tories would pink him, and the Whigs poison him."

"Faith! honest friend," said I, "you describe the two parties better than any one in the land." Then, turning to the General, I told him he had a right to reprove my forwardness; and in order that he might know on what person the reproof should fall, I gave him my name. He said many kind things, and added some compliments. I regretted that he was not received in the country with public honors, as having been commander-in-chief, and against a family then excluded by a majority of the nation, and now expelled by the whole. My indignation burst out against that wrangler and robber, Seymour, who a few days afterward drove him from the country, lest his virtues should be acknowledged, his sufferings pitied, his losses compensated, and his estates restored.[58]

Penn. We may discourse on better people and better things.

Peterborough. We will then

Away to the valleys, the mountains, and moors.

Pardon my bad singing. Even your mare flinched at it.

Our accounts of the Valdenses in England have never been explicit and particular.

Penn. Latterly the government has always been unfriendly to the growth of freedom in foreign countries, and to the purity of religion at home: wherefore,[59] as we yield to the impulse it gives, their success or annihilation would concern fewer now than formerly. In the time of Cromwell, this oppressed people was commiserated and protected.

Peterborough. I remember some verses written on their calamities by his Latin secretary, Mr Milton, a strenuous advocate of their cause.

[58 First ed. reads: "restored. In fact, William, was there ever an honest man or a modest woman in that family? was there ever an individual of either sex, unstigmatized for guile and rapacity? *Penn.* I know not, but certainly we may. . . . better things. *Peterborough.* Our accounts," &c. (5 lines below.)]

[59 From "wherefore" to "formerly" (2 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

Penn. And of every cause in which the glory of God and the dignity of man are implicated. He spake with the enthusiasm of a prophet, he reasoned with the precision of a philosopher, and he lived with the purity of a saint.

Peterborough. I love all great men, and hate all counterfeits of them, particularly such as are struck and milled at a blow in the royal mint. Cromwell does not displease me, though I should have fought against him, unless my uncle,[60] who commanded the artillery under Essex, had led me preferably to that side.

Penn. Thou wouldst have judged ill in fighting against him, for his side was the righteous one,—the side of the sufferer and the oppressed: and thou judgest no less ill in saying he doth not displease thee. He is thought to have been a hypocrite for the sake of power; whereas, in fact, he was sincere until power by degrees made him a hypocrite. How little then of it should be trusted to any man, when the wisest and the bravest and the calmest are thus perverted by it! However, in no instance did he exercise his authority to the detriment of his country, which indeed he elevated as high in glory as the hereditary Charles immersed it in disgrace. So great and so desirable a prince as Cromwell never since the creation had been appointed by the Lord of it, to preserve the liberties and to moderate the passions of a turbulent, a factious, and a sinful people.

Peterborough. When so many high-minded men were against him, and those nearest him the most, I wonder how he could contrive to mount above them as he did.

Penn. Whoever is possessed of such a genius, or any thing like it, and is resolved on deception, may rise to the first distinction: but neither deception without genius, nor genius without deception, will elevate him to that wide prospect of dominion, at which the tempter in his breast says, "This, O my worshipper, shall be thine!"

Peterborough. In general there is as much difference between a usurper and a hereditary king, as there is between a wild boar

[60] The Lord Peterborough who was Master General of the Ordnance in the service of the Commonwealth was not Peterborough's uncle, but his grandfather. His uncle was a strong loyalist, a trusted councillor of both Charles and James, and a convert to Catholicism. From "unless" to "side" (2 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

and a tame one: but Cromwell had nothing in him ferocious; nor had Charles any thing sordid, if we except the abandonment of his friends when they were distressed, and of his promises when they were inconvenient. I disapprove of the clownishness in some and of the levity in others, with which they treated the criminal on his trial; nor do I less disapprove of the slavish baseness, the corrupt sycophancy, with which in his prosperity the king was served by his equals: for above an English gentleman there neither ought to be, nor is there, in character and dignity, any thing upon earth. The king is the work of our hands, we are not the work of his; we existed before him, and shall exist after him: he may do much with us, without us nothing.

Penn. In this thou art wise; and on this secure part of thy wisdom let thy bravery act and rest.

Peterborough. I know not upon what principle the Chancellor Clarendon called Cromwell a *bold bad man*, unless it were to persuade us that he had read a play of Shakspeare's; in which we find the same words, rather more happily applied. People are bad and good relatively and comparatively. Oliver would have been but a sorry saint, and no very tractable disciple or apostle; nor do I imagine that you would have admitted him without a scrutiny into the Society of Friends: but he was a good father, a good husband, a good companion, a good soldier, and (taking up now the point on which we are to consider him) he was certainly the best usurper, if you can call him one at all, and perhaps the best prince, that ever lived. Mind, I speak of the functions of a prince, not of the accessaries, not of what belongs to the man or the philosopher. You will understand my reason for expressing a doubt of the Proctector being a usurper. If he was one, so is the gentleman I helped to introduce from Holland,[61] who is likewise a great man, and perhaps the next in dignity among our rulers. It is childish to talk of illegality because the army was the instrument. The army must always be the instrument in fundamental changes; and is never so well employed, not even in repelling an aggression. For we are liable to more mischief in our houses than out; liable to equal violence and greater depre-

[61 Peterborough played a considerable part in the introduction of William III. to England. This passage shows that Landor placed his visit to Pennsylvania at the latter of the two dates given in note 1.]

dation, and that depredation in costlier things; and the injury is the worse as coming from those about us, and trusted by us implicitly in our concerns.

Among such a people as the Valdenses, there is no danger of such a man as Cromwell obtaining an ascendency. They warmed you: which is more than he ever did, I will answer for him.

Penn. The commands and the practice of our teacher do not permit me to applaud the bloodshedder, although in resistance. We hold it unlawful to kill a fellow creature for any offence whatever.

Peterborough. But if the laws enact it, then surely it is lawful.

Penn. There is a law above the passions, above the mutabilities of man, from which whatever is lawful must emanate. Herein the commands of God are clear and definite.

Peterborough. Some of them; others not,—or rather they run quite contrary. You feel greater horror at murder than any people do, and yet you would punish it less severely.

Penn. I deem that offence the worst which tends farthest to deteriorate our social condition. Were it lawful to punish any one with death, it would be the conqueror holding in subjection the people that has not injured him, and that consents not to his domination. If a traveller, who has been robbed and bound by a thief, can unbind himself and recover his property, ye deem him justified in so doing, although he can do it by no other way than by slaying the thief.

Peterborough. Certainly; and praise his spirit.

Penn. If a prince exacteth from his people any part of their substance without asking their consent, or forces them to labor or fight, ye would deem that what is done by force may be resisted by force.

Peterborough. Princes who levy taxes and troops despotically may justly be killed by those who suffer under them, whether born in that condition or not: but every kind of government has made conquests, and has retained them by treaty; these therefore are inviolable.

Penn. By whom were the treaties made?

Peterborough. By the governors.

Penn. But if the majority of the people, convoked and

appealed to, did not consent without force or fear to pass under the new ruler, he who holds them in bondage may, according to thy principles and according to worldly justice, be slain by any of the conquered. And until it is agreed and enforced that no nation in Europe shall take possession of another, or of any part, international law will be no better than quibble and contradiction.

Peterborough.[62] He must be a legitimate fool, and of the purest breed, who believes that the powerful will ever cease to exercise their power for its propagation.

Penn. Ye defend the violence done by system, and punish by the gallows the same violence done by poor wretches incapable of reflection; done perhaps from want of food, perhaps from neglect of education, criminal not in the robber, but in the ministers of the prince. If power is ever righteously to be exercised by one State toward another, it is in taking away the means of injustice and cruelty from the administrators, and in restoring to the people their rights. When they once have them, and find them acknowledged, they will fear to hazard the enjoyment of them, as they must do by assailing or injuring another State. For instance, if the French were free, they would have no false appetite: being slaves they are restless for something to buoy them up from their degradation. They are yet to be taught that Honor may dwell in houses as well as under tents; and that, if they must boast for ever, they may boast of better things than having *served.*

Peterborough. Well said, my Quixote of orders gray! The next proposal I expect from you is the settlement of differences in the Moon; the second, the abolition of the slave-trade; and the third, of the Inquisition.

Penn. As to the Moon, thou hast more to look for there than I have, and I should gladly see thee righted: but oh that God would grant both those abolitions! I do indeed hold it just and reasonable in any powerful people to insist on them.

Peterborough. Insist! When a nation insists on any thing against another, it declares war.

Penn. There[63] is nothing in this life worth quarrelling for, and there is nothing to be gained by it in another: yet, apparently,

[62] From "*Peterborough*" to "*Penn*" (4 lines) added in 2nd ed.]
[63] From "There" to "apparently" (2 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

in the present state of things we never can be long at peace. Our quarrels are as frequent and as irrational as those of children. Since however the great evil of blood-shed must yet for some time continue, let us hope that, if the victory should be ours, the only punishment we inflict on the governors be the civilization of the governed. Let us hope that we may exact the freedom of the Africans and of the Spaniards, and may empty for ever the holds of the slave-ship and the dungeons of the Inquisition. We have the same right to stipulate the one as the other; and a much greater than to demand the cession of a single village, or the transfer of a single man.

Abolish the slave-trade! Ah, who can ever hope it? Whoever shall effect this will have effected more than the twelve apostles. *They* but threw a stone at a sparrow, and did not bring it to the ground; he will have placed his foot upon a serpent, more venomous than ever was feigned by fear or poetry, and will have crushed it in all its folds from the setting sun to the rising. What in comparison have all the philosophers done, or what have all the religious?—they have raised much dust, and have removed little. He indeed hath conquered his enemy, who binds him by moral obligations; he indeed is great and good, who knows how to make other men so; and he is in a worse condition than a slave, who reduces a higher mind to slavery. Incessant horrors haunt him, and eternal punishments (if there be any such) await him!

Princes of the earth! will ye never hear a truth unless what is preached to you by your fellows at the scaffold? Have ye forgotten so soon your last lesson? Alas! must it be repeated to you?

Peterborough. The old admiral would not perhaps have been so civil as to ask the question of them. He would have preached to them when he had cropped the hair from both ears, and had erected a sounding board to his liking at Whitehall.

Penn. Fools! it is they who make such men as my father. He had his faults: but he feared God and loved his country. Let us honor him! I must ever do it.

Peterborough. And I, too. I admire and venerate many whom I should be glad to fight against.

Penn. Strange creature! Are we then images of clay,

baked by children in the sun, to be broken for their entertainment?

Peterborough. The first of us are hardly worth a serious thought.

Penn. And yet how much happiness might even those who are not the first of us confer!

Peterborough. I should have said, *enjoy*.

Penn. I said it.

In the spirit of religion, which is humanity and nothing else, I may nevertheless demonstrate why these children of the mountains fought courageously. They believed that they were protecting the household and the house itself of God; they believed that their sufferings were trials, and that this life was given them for endurance, in proportion to which should be their happiness in the next. Hope is the mother of Faith.

Peterborough.[64] Who has a twin daughter very like her, named Folly.

Penn. Thy father may perhaps have said before thee, what mine often did, that good parents have sometimes worse children than one might have wished. It would, however, be inconsistent in thee to deny that energy and endurance are useful. Now nothing more certainly than Hope gives both endurance and energy to fighting men. If she can likewise give them to the suffering and imbecile, she must appear to thee still more admirable, as doing what is harder and better. Belief in a future state of happiness, as a recompense for unmerited and unavoidable evil, renders men patient and contented: and this effect neither their activity nor their ingenuity, neither their turbulence nor their eloquence, can bring about. It would be strange if that should be a weakness, which all the wisdom in the world cannot equal in its efficacy.

Peterborough. I am glad to hear you talk in this manner upon energy, since it proves that you yourself are not at heart so indifferent to it as the generality of the sect. Their practices would destroy by degrees the vigor of the human intellect; and the most energetic of our actions would be when we sneeze in the sunshine.

[64 First ed. reads: "*Peterborough.* She has a twin daughter, very like this, who has several young ones growing up about her—Folly. *Penn*," &c.]

Penn. You, my friend, like the generality of mankind, seem to have formed to yourself no idea of energy but in acts of violence. Now there may be as much of it in saving a man from drowning as in drowning him. If indeed we are prone to evil,—which you agree with us in believing, and on which supposition most sects of philosophy and all religions and all laws are founded,—more energy is requisite in doing well than in doing ill. If the mind is subject to its tempests and tornadoes, more strength and firmness are shown amid them by immovability than by velocity. We yield to wrong and falsehood,—if, indeed, I may employ two terms upon one thing.

Peterborough. How is that?

Penn. Wrong is but falsehood put in practice.

Peterborough. Would it not be better to expose the theoretical falsehood and to repress the practical? Or do you look only to the private harm done to yourselves, careless how far the evil may run on through its impunity.

Penn. Falsehood is for a season: truth is eternal.

Peterborough. William! William! the eternity of truth is not yet begun; and the season of falsehood has existed from the creation of man. I do not believe that this will ever cease, or the other ever commence: if it should, nine-tenths of the world will rise against it and overthrow it. Your wild men here will be the only men neutral, not caring an elk's antler about the matter. Those who could disseminate truth, with a large and copious hand, through all the nations of the world abstain from doing it: for there is no great mind without a share of foresight, and no share of foresight that does not glance down occasionally on the sharer. Hence those men calculate how much good the disseminating of truth will do to themselves, and how much good the garnering and secreting of it. Few of them come to any other conclusion than that it is better to hold it back for the present. They put it off from the work-day to the market-day; they put it off from the market-day to the fair-day: and there they walk among the booths and benches, until they find a commodity to exchange for it,—a sword-knot, a ribbon, a piece of purple or scarlet silk, or something that roughens in the hand, like

gold. You, adverse as you are to the profession of war, or even to personal defence, are more enthusiastic about the Valdenses, and (I would swear for you) would fight better for them, than almost any of our noble generals, who would despise them because they fight without uniforms, and who would hate them because they fight for themselves.

You have related these battles with more spirit and energy than become your stoicism, and you leave me only to regret the want of *names* in the recital of heroism. This is the principal defect in modern historians, the worst of which are the English. They see only kings and ministers,[65] and, when they should be busy in action, they sink to the knees in the heavy sands of disquisition. The courage, the firmness, the philosophy, which would have elevated men to the first station in a republic, are mentioned but in their effects. A victory is the king's or the nation's: the head that planned it, the hand that guided to it, are unseen, unknown. Self-devotion to any great cause is without a record, and abstract principles lie among cold reflections. The immortal authors of antiquity chiselled out the more prominent characters, and traced the less: we have only white and black upon one smooth surface.

Penn. Beware! beware! Do not make me more of a republican than I am. Certainly we find the names of fewer great men in our English histories than in the ancient: yet if our nation had produced fewer, our institutions must have been worse. The assertion and the defence of freedom are never made without danger. Some are now living, and many have died lately, who hazarded their properties and lives for public law; and no few lost them for it. Instead of mentioning them with honor and reverence, we calumniate and revile them. This, indeed, will always be the case under the influence of party: but, taking a wider and fairer view of the subject, we find, as thou leadest me to remark, that English writers are less disposed to celebrate English worthies, than are the writers of any other country those who improved its condition and labored for its glory. There are histories, and

[65 First ed. reads: "ministers, with a mistress or two peeping from behind the curtain. The courage," &c. (2 lines below.)]

not deemed bad ones, wherein are omitted the names even of the great citizens by whom our freedom was founded. If the Greeks and Romans had done so, we should not have been supplied with that renovating spirit which keeps alive in us the generous sentiment these ruder but stronger men implanted.

Why[66] dost thou cut the air with thy wand, spurring at once and coercing thy animal?

Peterborough. I was recollecting with admiration the valor of your Valdenses. Glorious! to make such a resistance against a regular force.

Penn. And is it for this only, or for this principally, that they are admirable? Soldiers could not have acted so; for even the best of them are vicious. The very names of vices were unknown for the most part to these persecuted men; insomuch that in the whole of their annals for many centuries we find no instance of juridical animadversion on a single crime. Thuanus informs us that there was not a lawsuit among them until the sixteenth century; when a peasant, richer than most others, sent his son to study the law at Turin, who on his return brought an action against his neighbor for letting some goats eat his cabbage. Pope Innocent the Third was resolved on exterminating them. The French historian, Girard, saith hereupon that nothing in fact drew down so heavily on them the hatred of His Holiness, as the freedom wherewith they reprehended the vices of ecclesiastics.

Now wilt thou tell me that it is a matter of indifference in religion, whether the professors of it persecute and murder us for the detection of iniquity, or search into it and reprove it? Wilt thou tell me that it is better to keep a strong hand over others than over ourselves? or to examine the secrets of their hearts rather than our own? Lax morals may appear for a time opportune and convenient to thee: but wouldst thou wish thy son or thy daughter, if thou hadst one, to experience the utility of them? or wouldst thou choose a domestic, in town or country, as being the wiser or the honester for thinking like thyself?

Peterborough. It would bring him to the gallows within the year: for such fellows can have no sense of honor to direct them.

[66] From "Why" to "animal" (2 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

Penn. Sense of honor, it appeareth to me, is that exquisite perception whereby a man apprehendeth how he may do the most injury to others for the longest time; how he may be most acceptable to society at the least expense or pains. My own sense of it, on the contrary, I would desire to be such as may direct me how to do to others what shall both content and improve them, not concealing my own infirmities nor exposing theirs. Among you, a lofty spirit must be ever an inflammable one; and Courage hath not room for Patience at the side of her. Ye pardon everything done against your God, and nothing done against yourselves: which maketh me sometimes doubt whether those who are called liberal may not be peradventure the most illiberal of mankind.

In this country we must assist one another; and the necessity brings its blessing. Our religion and our polity spring alike from a virgin soil: in neither of them are we tethered to the stump of old superstitions. Haply [67] thou art listening so patiently because thou heedest so little?

Peterborough. No, indeed. Not only do I listen to you with patience and pleasure, but even discuss with you such questions as I should nauseate with others; because your religion does not teach you to seek for occasions of hatred on divergences of opinion. Men no longer in wolf-skin but in velvet or brocade, and slit-sleeved and white-handed, still continue to sacrifice human victims,—not indeed with the knife, because the laws wrest it out of the fist, but with heart and soul,—and burn the offender in the fires of their evil passions. I do believe that many of the early Christians (for I know that some of the living) would listen calmly to the most inconsiderate doubts, and would rather suffer pain from them than inflict it for them. But such a spirit never was universal or prevalent. And why? because, as I have said before, and as priests of all sects have agreed, Christianity has never yet taken root in any country under heaven. It resembles what we often see on our tables at the dessert,—dwarf fruits in ornamental vases.

Penn. Idleness is no sign of dignity with us; ministerial prevarication no passport to princely trust. No man's luxuries are here so mischievous as to wring the mouldy morsel from the

[67 From "Haply" to "*Penn*" (19 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

famished peasant, and to drill his son against him if he should demand it back. The smoke of our chimneys may rise above our roofs unpaid for; and we may see the face of day and the works of God without the demand of a shilling to the showman.

Peterborough. Dear William, no nation pays for light and air, although hearths in many countries are still taxed.

Penn. When human beings are so degraded by slavery as to pay another for the use of their own fire-places and fuel, they will in the next generation be coerced to pay even for the common air and light.

Peterborough. Your natural calmness, my worthy friend, softly as you speak, hath surely left you. No nation upon earth ever yet submitted to such branding ignominy, such heart-eating despotism. Abuses, however, and something of usurpation, will ultimately find entrance, or force it, even here. Decorations and distinctions are natural objects of desire throughout the world. Religion herself, so pretty and innocent in her girlish days, becomes as she grows up—

A drab of state, a *cloth o' silver* jade:

and, in the midst of her finery, she tosses down her gin grenadierly; cries, "Come along with me!" and kicks you if you hang back in going whither she would closet you. Who knows but that friend Penn, some time hence, may be found cutting out a pair of lawn-sleeves from the most approved pattern at the milliners in Lambeth, while the wenches are debating round what color is best for his more sanctified order of the garter, and whether a loop and button on the beaver might not in all righteousness be allowed to his house of peers? It is difficult to say what is the worst part of us: the best part is the possession of good easy fortunes, and the facility of mending them, when they want it, out of any man's shop we choose to enter. But the worst of Religion is, in my opinion, her wilfulness in having tragedies acted by her own servants, when there are so many fine pieces performed in other houses, with universal applause.

Penn. Friend Mordaunt, I do not require of thee to speak gravely; thy high spirits and wittiness become thee: and truly I love to see every man as nature formed him, bating his propensity to selfishness and injustice, by which we are most of us influenced

unless we check them. These are the causes why the decorations and distinctions thou mentionest are so generally the objects of desire, that thou deemest them naturally so, and universally. Men see them belonging to others who are without merit, and are angry at it; yet would they themselves snatch them from people who have merit. But suppose that, instead of garters under the knee like hoydens, and buttons big as sun-flowers on the left pap, ye substituted the hearty smile of every house ye entered, a pressure of the hand for every violence ye had calmed, and the thanks of your own hearts for every wrong ye had redressed,—would the exchange be much against you? These trappings and accoutrements, this holiday bravery of groom-boy harness, can influence our people no more than the feathers and ochre of our brethren in the woods. Where there is cleanliness and decency there is usually content: the same well-regulated mind produces both. Ambitious men I have always found disorderly and sordid.

Rising out of a condition so different from the barbarous one, wherein Feodality set up her lions and leopards and other wild creatures, real or feigned, which ye not unaptly call your supporters, we must undergo some ages of savage life in these forests, we must be hunters and murderers and oppressors, long before we can raise ourselves to the same line with you. And what advantages, I will not ask thee, can others derive from it, but what dost thou thyself? Art thou not indignant and scornful that others are preferred to thee? This indignation and scorn could not arise, were your institutions good and fitting. Wherever institutions are not deplorably imperfect, a wise man will find employment for his wisdom. The best carpenter will have work given him, even in places where little judgment is exercised. Shall, then, he who is most capable of acting or of reasoning be neglected or unemployed?

A house of peers in Pennsylvania! I have no mistresses; nobody has cut another's throat for me; nobody has increased my prerogative by his interpretation of my laws: on what grounds, then, can I erect a house of peers? and on what other canst thou trace the foundation of one anywhere?

Peterborough. It is wiser and pleasanter to look at the consequence than at the origin. Polished manners, and that mutual

civility which you inculcate and exact, are acquisitions from aristocracy—

Penn. Made, no doubt, under those who, like lampreys, have always their heads on the ground, wriggling their bodies incessantly: and for what? why, to suck a stone.

Peterborough. Faith! there are many of them who suck better things than that; and whose suckers are of such strength and dimensions they can wrinkle your pockets and bags across the seas. I am no courtier, nor ever shall be. Soldier[68] I am, and shall be always, and equally in readiness, whether in the field or out. This must depend upon the cabinet, as such things are fitly called.

> In games of politics and games of cricket
> Some must stand out while others keep the wicket.

There is a rhyme for you.

Penn. Truly, I should have suspected it of being one.

Peterborough. Suspect as acutely that I did not take my seat to serve or to sleep on it. If I act and think for myself at present, dependent as I am and in pupilage, there is little danger that a place in the peerage will teach me the trade of a lackey.

Penn. Thou thinkest so; and verily I think so too: but riches make some men vile, as poverty makes others proud. In England, good manners may grow perhaps only in high places; where truly, in the finest seasons, I have met with but scanty crops: the gentry imitate you; the merchants them. Thus far thou art right. But dost thou imagine that good manners may not spring up from under every form of government? The Goths brought them into Europe; the Moors perfected them: yet should we not have had them without the Goths or Moors? Or would we desire the Goths or Moors again with us, because we happened to derive from them a modification of good manners? Hast thou ever witnessed a single uncivil act or unbecoming speech within the fortnight thou hast spent among us?

[68] From "Soldier" to "sleep on it" (10 lines) added in 2nd ed.

Peterborough. I must acknowledge I never found anywhere such concession and conciliation. In the French there is a glossiness of character: they are easily broken and easily fused again, and are the best when they are the most superficial. What a scoundrel in scarlet was Richelieu, because he had one tendon more in him than the generality have, and was always springing upon it!

Penn. His intellect (if his writings are any proof) was indeed very limited; and its limits were contracted into a smaller compass by his jealousy and vanity: but his confidence gave him power, and power increased his confidence; so that he overthrew many men stronger than himself. He however had them in a slippery place to trip them up in. A mere child, with a king in his hand, may break many heads and close many eyes about him.

I find, friend Mordaunt, thou wilt soon be one of us.

Peterborough. How so?

Penn. Thou beginnest to speak plainly, albeit thou, in speaking of the man Richelieu, usest a term eschewed and dropped by us friends.

Peterborough. By another such deduction you may argue that I am growing old.

Penn. Nay, there the deduction is too fine for me: take it up and trace it, I pray thee.

Peterborough. I begin to speak plainly, and must therefore be soon one of you, since you speak so. That I am growing old is as clear, since I have begun to be fond of young girls.

Penn. Out upon thee, filthy man! When wilt thou sober? Didst thou ride up so closely to me to whisper that? Away, away! Thou wilt not desert thy country for the French, I thank: but we may discuss the matter of politeness in which they excel, as they teach us. Compared with one of our society, who claim none of it, a Frenchman would appear to thee the more polite, from thy preconceived ideas of politeness; and an Englishman more hearty, from preconception also. For the foundation of civility it is requisite that all malignity be smoothened, and that evil-speakers be inhibited like evil-doers.

Peterborough. You must purify our English blood then. We have within us that acrid salt which effloresces eternally, and

which, it appears, we must rub off one against the other. The French, and the continentals in general, indulge in evil-speaking only as the groundwork of witticisms. The Englishman is contented with it crude and massy, and returns day after day to the identical dish hot or cold, seasoned or unseasoned, with an incurious, equable, persevering, straightforward appetite. I have known even our women, and those the mildest and most religious, insinuate such things of their acquaintance as would discredit the whole family, and render it wretched throughout its existence.

Penn. Yet thou couldst listen to these sirens; and not only while they sang, but while they were tearing the flesh from their prey!

Peterborough. We must take the evil with the good: the region of spices bears the *upas-tree.* Certain they will speak ill of me when I have turned my back, I defer the moment as long as I am able.

What is here? Wheel round the black mare, William, or you will see what you would rather not.

Penn. Where? show me it.

Peterborough. I did not believe that you countenanced any kind of gaming.

Penn. We forbid it rigorously.

Peterborough. What are those men about yonder, with several looking on? They surely are drawing lots.

Penn. Those four men upon the bench under the old acacia?

Peterborough. The same.

Penn. They are deputed to judge a cause. We have no solicitors, as thou knowest: every citizen stateth his own case; four intelligent men are appointed by lot as judges, in presence of the litigants; they draw a second time, and he to whom the lot falls decides the question.

Peterborough. You disclaim all honors and distinctions; yet do not you entitle these men judges?

Penn. While they are: to-morrow one of them may be called the hatter, another the mason, another the skinner.

Peterborough. Ha! no wonder that fellow is upon the bench.

Penn. Thou knowest none more prudent in investigating, more patient in deliberating, or more upright in deciding. Despise him

not because his skins are in his shop rather than upon his shoulder, nor because an ox's is not an ermine's.

Peterborough. What salaries have these people? Or rather, what compensation for loss of time?

Penn. Thou speakest too good English. Loss of time! this at least is not the portion of it that is lost. We repay them as is reasonable for the good they do.

Peterborough. That is what I asked: but how?

Penn. By enabling them to do more good.

Peterborough. The honesty and rectitude of your people would induce those of every nation to a commercial intercourse with them, if your agricultural occupations allowed it.

Penn. It is untrue that nations cannot be at once agricultural and commercial. That the most commercial are the most agricultural, the States of Holland and indeed the Netherlands at large are evidences; and, in another hemisphere, China. Attica, composed of rocks, was better cultivated than Sparta. Carthage and Alexandria, Bruges and Dantzic, put into motion fifty ploughs with every rudder.

Remove from mankind the disabilities that wrong systems of government have imposed, and their own interests will supply them both with energy and with morality. I speak of men as we find them about us, possessing the advantages of example and experience.

Here we are at home again. Thy valet is running hitherward with his hat off, beating the flies and gnats away. My helper, Abel, standeth expecting me, but knitting hose.

Abel! Abel!

Abel. Friend, what wouldst thou?

Penn. Take my mare and feed her. Hast thou dined?

Abel. Nay.

Penn. Art hungry?

Abel. Yea.

Penn. Greatly?

Abel. In thy house none hungereth painfully: but verily at this hour my appetite waxeth sharp.

Penn. Feed then, first, this poor good creature, the which is accustomed to eat oftener than thou art, and the which haply hath fasted longer.

Abel. Thou sayest well: it shall be done even as thou advisest.

Peterborough. There are only three classes of men that we in general have no patience with,—superiors, inferiors, and equals. You have given me abundant and perpetual proofs that you can bear the two latter; and I am persuaded that you would place any decent one of the former in the same easy posture, if God, decreeing his happiness or amendment, should ever direct him toward you.

XXIV. WINDHAM AND SHERIDAN.[1]

Windham. It is seldom, Mr Sheridan, that we have met anywhere out of the House of Commons these last two years; and I rejoice in the opportunity of expressing my admiration of your generous conduct, on an occasion in which the country at large, and I particularly as minister, was deeply interested.

Sheridan. I am happy, sir, to be countenanced by your favorable opinion on any; but I presume you now refer to my speech on the mutiny at the Nore.[2]

Windham. Indeed I do; you stood nobly forth from your party. Never was behavior more ignominious than the behaviour of the Whigs has been, systematically, since the commencement of the war. Whatever they could do or suggest to the detriment of their country, or to the advancement of France,

[1 This is one of several conversations relating to the history of Ireland, and here Landor is more historical and less prejudiced than is usual with him when treating of catholics and Tory governments. Windham was a member of the Pitt ministry, and only resigned when George III. made a stand on the question of Catholic Emancipation, after the Act of Union had been carried. Sheridan opposed the measure in the English Parliament to the utmost of his power, declaring that the consent of the Irish Parliament had only been obtained by corruption and intimidation. The minute particulars of the methods employed will not be known until the Home Office has so far recovered from the shame of the transaction as to allow the documents referring to it to be made public. But for five years Pitt continued to send £8000 a year to Ireland for expenditure in aid of the Bill, and during that time the Irish Debt was increased by more than £30,000,000. How the money was spent can only be guessed at. Works, ii., 1846. Works, iii., 1876.]

[2 In 1797.]

they seized on with avidity. But you manfully came forward and apart from those traitors, declaring that insubordination should be reduced, and that rebellion should be crushed. I heartily wish, and confidently hope, that you will display the same energy and decision in the great measure of the Union now projected with Ireland.

Sheridan. I have heard nothing about it, as likely to be carried speedily into execution. But the vast number of indigent and worthless people who have lately been made Irish peers might excite a suspicion that something of moment was in agitation. Many must be bought over again. Such men, for instance, as Hely Hutchinson, Lord Clonmel, Lord Clare,[3] and other exhalations of the bog and dunghill, who have always in readiness for the service of any Administration a menace, a defiance, and a pistol: such men will never be contented with the few thousands of income they have in various ways obtained; their demands will rise with their services, and unless the demands are satisfied the petitioners will turn into patriots. In such a course is usually the beginning or the termination of public men: seldom both. The Irish have begun to learn arithmetic in the English school. Fortunes in this country have risen so high and so suddenly on the base of politics, as to have attracted the gaze and to have excited the aspiration of Ireland. She sees how the Grenvilles and Temples have always speculated on this grand Exchange. They have bought in and sold out with singular discretion. Hence a family of small pretensions to antiquity, far from affluent until recently, has been somewhat enriched at every generation. Lord Grenville, who receives forty thousand a year from his tellership of the Exchequer, which in time of peace brought him scarcely a tenth, was strenuous for war; while Pitt hung back, in suspense for a moment whether he should comply

[3 The men here mentioned all belonged to the Ascendancy party in Ireland who disliked the Union, because it threatened to destroy the place and power they had possessed in Ireland. The opposition of that party in many cases yielded to bribery. Hely Hutchinson was not likely to oppose any measure; he had been a place-hunter all his life. Lord Clare, the Chancellor of Ireland, was the leader of the Ascendancy party. He was mainly responsible for the intrigue which drove Lord Fitzwilliam from Ireland in 1795. Lord Clonmel was Lord Chief Justice of Ireland at the time of the Union.]

with the king's wishes or retire from office. The Duke of Portland, as you know, stipulated for a renewal of the lease of Marybone Park, before he would join the ministry with his adherents. The value of this lease is calculated at two hundred thousand. The Irish peers may fairly demand something handsome for the surrender of their power and patronage; I should have added their *dignities*, had I not been aware that either to laugh or to excite laughter is, at times, unseasonable.

Windham. The terms are not exactly known at present; and indeed the business is so complicated, that doubts are beginning to arise whether the scheme will be practicable in the present year.

Sheridan. Much depends on the amount of secret-service money the parliament will consent to vote.

This union might be the greatest blessing that ever was conferred on Ireland. But when I consider how unjustly, how harshly, how treacherously, she has been treated by all administrations, my suspicions rise far above my hopes. It is rumored that the conditions (which however there will be time enough to reconsider and to modify) are less favorable than were granted to Scotland; and that what is, and always has been in every country under heaven, the main object is not to be conceded. I mean the religion of the majority. On the abolition of episcopacy in Scotland, its revenues were applied to the religious and moral education of the people who renounced the old religion, rejected the formulary of the English, and chose another. Surely then in common justice, to say nothing of policy, nothing of conciliation, those from whom churches and church-lands were taken away, having at least as fair a claim to such things as those who never were in possession of them, should receive the plunder back. In doing this to the full extent, you would still do less for Ireland than was done for Scotland.

Windham. We have always been tender in touching vested rights.

Sheridan. To my apprehension you were not very tender in your touch on the vestment of the Irish Catholic Church. The vestment had, indeed, too many folds and flounces about it, and, instead of covering the brawny shoulders of twenty or thirty fathers, might have been conveniently cut up for the shirts and shifts of as many hundred children. But you never drew

out scissors or measure for that purpose: you only stripped the vesture off one fat fellow to clap it on another fatter.

Windham. True enough. The Bishop of Derry's landed property extends, I hear, over a hundred and fifty thousand acres, and cottagers pay thirty shillings a year for half acres, not the best, of this very land. Suppose that at the termination of the war, after hard cruises, hard battles, and harder blockades, all our admirals return home; many with amputated limbs, many with incurable wounds, many (indeed most) with broken or impaired constitutions: raise the number of them to half a hundred, and the consolidated pay of these half hundred great and glorious defenders of their country will be less than the pay of one churchman.

Sheridan. And it is painful to think of how much shorter date.

Windham. Have they no reason to complain of such inequality? Have they no right to check and correct it?

All of what are called church-lands belong to the State, as the Church itself does; and bishoprics have, since the Reformation, not only been curtailed but abolished. If Parliament can take away a whole bishopric, it surely can take away a moiety, especially that moiety which bishops care least about, the temporalities. Grievous responsibility would be thus removed from them. No longer a necessity to rise early and to sit down late, for the purpose of supplying the indigent and afflicted; no longer a solicitude in seeking out the faithful, merciful, discreet, and active almoner; no longer the worldly care of laying aside the larger part of their revenues, in just and exact proportions, for families more or less numerous, for curates more or less laborious, "for sick widows and young children."

Sheridan. In other parts of Europe to which the Reformation has extended, not only the religion but also its emoluments have been revised and corrected. Government in England should exercise this authority where required. Where there are no, or only few, communicants of the Anglican Church in Ireland, it is expedient for them to remove to places where there are many. At all events I would maintain no church establishment for a less number than a hundred adults.

Windham. There are gentlemen in the House of Commons

who insist that where a single man, woman, or child exists in any parish, that parish should enjoy its parson, if Protestant.

Sheridan. But there are many parishes in which there is not a single Protestant,—man, woman, or child; however, as there is a steeple, and not only a steeple but a pulpit, no doubt there should also be a minister of religion for their benefit. If towns which contain several thousand inhabitants have no representative at all, there would be no worse hardship in fewer than one hundred having no established pastor. But this hardship might not befall them, for they might elect one; and they might themselves pay him proportionally to the service he renders; or they might remove into a more convenient and less contracted fellowship. The most pious and serious of the English people are taught the doctrines of the English Church by unendowed ministers. The followers of Wesley do not hanker after gowns and surplices; at least such gowns and surplices as mount the pulpit. Well-educated young men of his persuasion are always in readiness to accept the cure of souls. It is only the earnest and patient who are likely to file the old rust and new paint off the crucifix. The Wesleyans may be too impetuous, heady, and frothy; but a gutter that runs with rapidity is less unwholesome than a stagnant ditch. I feel that I lie open to a charge of partiality in this recommendation of the Methodists; but I do assure you I am not about to join them, and I venture to hope that your smile is not a smile of incredulity.

Windham. Be perfectly at ease. But, seriously, in turning out this acid on such putridity, there would be a violent fermentation: there would be animosities and conflicts. However, what harm if there should be? Turn out the weasel against the rat, and, at least while they are fighting, neither of them can corrode the rafters or infest the larder. Your countrymen are a joyous and light-hearted people, and run with alacrity to festivals and fairs. They would not so readily fall in with Calvinism; they are more disposed to fighting, frolic, and pardon.

Sheridan. Frolic and pardon they would never find among the Calvinists, who however, in strict justice, would amply make out the difference with fighting.

Windham. We will revert to the right which all governments

possess, of curtailing or abolishing the hire of their servants: I admit it. The question at last resolves itself into mere expediency. If our government, after a war, reduces the pay of its soldiers and abolishes altogether the pay of its sailors, it may consistently, justly, and legally do the same in regard to the Church Militant. Whether the pay arises from a turf or from a counter, no matter.

Sheridan. Apply the principle more especially to Ireland. A nation has been misruled for above six centuries by its conqueror. The conqueror has derived the most powerful and efficient aid from it against all his enemies, and wishes to derive more. To accomplish which, a sudden thought strikes him, which never entered his head until now; that, by rendering it more flourishing, he renders it more effectual in his defence. Another sudden thought strikes him. He remembers that, a century ago, he made a compact of Union with another out-lying country, and that both grew richer and happier instantaneously. The out-lying country had fought, and would fight again, for the establishment and maintenance of its religion. The conqueror cares little about the matter as far as God and conscience are concerned, but very much about the interests of some riotous idlers and rich absentees.

Ireland would be contented with a less measure of justice than was meted out to Scotland: and you may gain tenfold as much by it. Scotland has no important bays and harbors; Ireland has more than any country of the same extent.

Windham. More than Norway?

Sheridan. Those of Norway are unimportant, although capacious. Surrounded by barren rocks, affording no anchorage, there is neither traffic nor population. Ireland has better and more than all France. What wars would not England engage in to wrest them from an enemy? What a bustle in the last century about Dunkirk! and, in the century before, about such a pitiful hole as Calais! A single act of beneficence, of justice, of policy—of policy the most advantageous to ourselves—would render these noble bays and harbors ours for ever, guarded at no expense to us by as brave and loyal a nation as any upon earth. Can stubbornness and stupidity be imagined grosser, than in refusing to curtail the superfluity of

about eight hundred inefficient drones, detested in general by the majority of their neighbors, when it would conciliate eight millions, and save the perpetual expenditure of a standing army to control them!

Windham. His Majesty is averse to concession.

Sheridan. His Majesty was averse to concession to America; and into what disasters and disgraces, unexperienced, unapprehended, unheard of among us until his Majesty's reign, did this pig-headedness of his Majesty thrust us down!

Windham. By what I hear, there is also another thing which may disincline the Irish from the Union. Not only will the property of the Irish Catholic Church be withholden from its first destination,—from which destination, I acknowledge, it was forcibly and violently torn away,—but a certain part of our own national debt will be saddled on that people.[4]

Sheridan. What! when we lie on the debtor's side, and they on the creditor's? If Ireland were paid for her soldiers, in the same proportion as we pay for the Hanoverians and Hessians and other Germans, what a balance would she strike against us!

By reducing the English Church in Ireland to the same condition of wealth as the reformed churches of Germany; by selling all church-lands there, and by devoting to the religious and moral education of the people the whole proceeds, in just proportion to the Papal and Protestant communicants,—you would conciliate all farsighted, all humane, all equitable men throughout the island. The lands held under the Crown might also be added.

Windham. Now indeed you are a visionary, Mr Sheridan! You could sooner uproot the whole island from the Atlantic, than tear from his Majesty an acre of the worst land in it.

Sheridan. I do believe in my conscience he would rather lose the affection of half his subjects than the carcass of one fat sheep. I am informed that all his possessions in Ireland never yielded him five thousand a year. Give him ten, and he will chuckle at over-

[4 See "Two Centuries of Irish History," p. 250, for an account of the effect of the Union upon Irish Finance. Dr Bridges there points out that the Irish Exchequer was to bear two seventeenths of the united yearly expenditure of both countries. The result of this arrangement was to throw on Ireland a charge far heavier than that country could bear, and as a result to increase the Irish Debt very largely.]

reaching you; and not you only, but his own heirs for ever,—as he chuckled when he cheated his eldest son of what he pocketed in twenty years from Cornwall, Lancashire, and Wales. The crown lands in Ireland, unprofitable at present, are large enough so support half a million subjects reduced to poverty and starvation by his oppressive policy and unjust wars.

Windham. You have been suggesting two impracticabilities, however desirable.

Sheridan. Ministers then have been suggesting another, the Union. They may bring about an Act of Parliament called an Act of Union; but they will be necessitated to piece out their parchment with cartridge paper.

Windham. We can have fighting enough on easier terms elsewhere. If the framers of the Union are equitable and indulgent, Ireland in half a century from its commencement may contribute ten millions a year to the national revenue. If they are unjust, not only will she contribute less than half that amount, but she will oblige the Government to keep up a standing army to coerce her. Instead of furnishing us with a third of our forces, she will paralyze a third of them and keep them sedentary.

Sheridan. Beside, she will become a temptation to France and even to inferior Powers to provoke us with aggression and insult, showing them that one hand is tied up behind us. What a farce in the meanwhile is the diversionary talk about the abolition of the slave-trade! What insanity to think of throwing down fifteen or twenty millions to compass an impracticability, to consolidate a dream! Half the money laid out upon Ireland, not in an unmanageable mass all at once, but million by million, year after year, would within ten years render that country prosperous and contented: not, however, if you resolve to proscribe her religion, to strip its ministers to the skin, and to parade before them and their communicants, on their own ground, your greasy pastors,—mere boils and blotches covered with the vestments purloined from their church.

Windham. Indeed it would be well, and certainly is expedient, to conciliate so brave a people. When we are richer, we may encourage their agriculture and their fisheries.

Sheridan. They want no other encouragement from you than equity and security. Let the people be contented, and

tranquillity is necessarily the result. Let tranquillity be established, and speculators will cover land and sea with English capital.

Windham. As politicians we may rejoice in a religion which, were the natives in easy circumstances, would be favorable to the fisheries.

Sheridan. At the present time there are millions of Roman Catholics in the country who never tasted fish.

Windham. It must be acknowledged that little has been hitherto effected for the comforts of the people. The first man that ever made a movement to assist them was Lord Bacon. He would have given to them the same advantages of every kind as we ourselves enjoy. Humanity was never very urgent with him; but his consummate wisdom prompted to this counsel. I am afraid we must wait until we have men equally wise among us before the counsel is taken.

Sheridan. What hope then? No nation in Europe has treated the conquered so iniquitously as the English have treated the Irish. We must go back to Sparta and the Helots for a parallel. But Sparta did not send out missionaries to establish her pure faith in other lands: Sparta did not piously curse her poorer citizens if they happened to enjoy one day in seven. We, having such advantages over her, may feel somewhat too confident of God's countenance and blessing, and we may at last encroach and push his patience until he loudly cries out and curses us.

Windham. I indulge in few golden dreams about the green island; but certainly no country is capable of such improvement so easily effected.

Sheridan. Henry IV. expressed a wish and indulged a hope to see the day when every householder in France should have a pullet for dinner once a week: I only wish that every poor Irishman could add a duck annually to his household. Pig and duck (as Lord Castlereagh would express it, if he knew any thing or cared any thing about the matter) play into one another's hands very nicely. Even this addition to the comforts of an Irish family is little to be expected from the framers of the Union.

XXV. LOUIS XVIII. AND TALLEYRAND.[1]

Louis. M. Talleyrand, in common with all my family, all France, all Europe, I entertain the highest opinion of your abilities and integrity. You have convinced me that your heart, throughout the storms of the Revolution, leaned constantly toward royalty; and that you permitted and even encouraged the caresses of the usurper, merely that you might strangle the more certainly and the more easily his new-born empire. After this, it is impossible to withhold my confidence from you.

Talleyrand. Conscious of the ridicule his arrogance and presumption would incur, the usurper attempted to silence and stifle it with other and far different emotions. Half his cruelties were perpetrated that his vanity might not be wounded; for scorn is superseded by horror. Whenever he committed an action or uttered a sentiment which would render him an object of derision, he instantly gave vent to another which paralyzed by its enormous wickedness. He would extirpate a nation to extinguish a smile. No man alive could deceive your Majesty: the extremely few who would wish to do it lie under that vigilant and piercing eye which discerned in perspective from the gardens of Hartwell those of the Tuileries and Versailles. As joy arises from calamity, so spring arises from the bosom of winter purely to receive your Majesty, inviting the august descendant of their glorious founder to adorn and animate them again with his beneficent and gracious presence. The waters murmur, in voices half-suppressed, the reverential hymn of peace restored; the woods bow their heads—

Louis. Talking of woods, I am apprehensive all the game has been wofully killed up in my forests.

Talleyrand. A single year will replenish them.

Louis. Meanwhile! M. Talleyrand, meanwhile!

Talleyrand. Honest and active and watchful gamekeepers in sufficient number must be sought; and immediately.

Louis. Alas! if the children of my nobility had been edu-

[1 Works, ii., 1846. Works, iii., 1876.]

cated like the children of the English, I might have promoted some hundreds of them in this department. But their talents lie totally within the binding of their breviaries. Those of them who shoot can shoot only with pistols; which accomplishment they acquired in England, that they might challenge any of the islanders who should happen to look with surprise or displeasure in their faces, expecting to be noticed by them in Paris for the little hospitalities the proud young gentlemen, and their prouder fathers, were permitted to offer them in London and at their country seats. What we call *reconnaisance*, they call *gratitude*, treating a recollector like a debtor. This is a want of courtesy, a defect in civilization, which it behooves us to supply. Our memories are as tenacious as theirs, and rather more eclectic.

Since my return to my kingdom I have undergone great indignities from this unreflecting people. One Canova, a sculptor at Rome, visited Paris in the name of the Pope, and in quality of his envoy, and insisted on the cession of those statues and pictures which were brought into France by the French armies. He began to remove them out of the Gallery; I told him I would never give my consent: he replied, he thought it sufficient that he had Wellington's. Therefore, the next time Wellington presented himself at the Tuileries, I turned my back upon him before the whole court. Let the English and their allies be aware that I owe my restoration not to them, but partly to God and partly to Saint Louis. They and their armies are only brute instruments in the hands of my progenitor and intercessor.

Talleyrand. Fortunate, that the conqueror of France bears no resemblance to the conqueror of Spain. Peterborough (I shudder at the idea) would have ordered a file of soldiers to seat your Majesty in your travelling carriage, and would have reinstalled you at Hartwell. The English people are so barbarous, that he would have done it not only with impunity but with applause.

Louis. But the sovereign of his country—would the sovereign suffer it?

Talleyrand. Alas! sire! Confronted with such men, what are sovereigns, when the people are the judges? Wellington can drill armies: Peterborough could marshal nations.

Louis. Thank God! we have no longer any such pests on

earth. The most consummate general of our days (such is Wellington) sees nothing one single inch beyond the field of battle; and he is so observant of discipline, that, if I ordered him to be flogged in the presence of the allied armies, he would not utter a complaint nor shrug a shoulder: he would only write a dispatch.

Talleyrand. But his soldiers would execute the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto, and Paris would sink into her catacombs. No man so little beloved was ever so well obeyed; and there is not a man in England, of either party, citizen or soldier, who would not rather die than see him disgraced. His firmness, his moderation, his probity, place him more opposite to Napoleon than he stood in the field of Waterloo. These are his lofty lines of Torres Vedras, which no enemy dares assail throughout their whole extent.

Louis. M. Talleyrand! is it quite right to extol an enemy and an Englishman in this manner?

Talleyrand. Pardon! sire! I stand corrected. Forgive me a momentary fit of enthusiasm, in favor of those qualities by which, although an Englishman's, I am placed again in your Majesty's service.

Louis. We will now, then, go seriously to business. Wellington and the allied armies have interrupted and occupied us. I will instantly write, with my own hand, to the Marquis of Buckingham, desiring him to send me five hundred pheasant-eggs. I am restored to my throne, M. Talleyrand, but in what a condition! Not a pheasant on the table! I must throw myself on the mercy of foreigners, even for a pheasant! When I have written my letter, I shall be ready to converse with you on the business on which I desired your presence.

[*Writes.*] Here; read it. Give me your opinion: is not the note a model?

Talleyrand. If the charms of language could be copied, it would be. But what is intended for delight may terminate in despair: and there are words which, unapproachable by distance and sublimity, may wither the laurels on the most exalted of literary brows.

Louis. There is grace in that expression of yours, M. Talleyrand! there is really no inconsiderable grace in it. Seal

my letter: direct it to the Marquis of Buckingham at Stowe. Wait, open it again: no, no: write another in your own name; instruct him how sure you are it will be agreeable to me, if he sends at the same time fifty or a hundred brace of the birds as well as the eggs. At present I am desolate. My heart is torn, M. Talleyrand! it is almost plucked out of my bosom. I have no other care, no other thought, day or night, but the happiness of my people. The allies, who have most shamefully overlooked the destitution of my kitchen, seem resolved to turn a deaf ear to its cries evermore; nay, even to render them shriller and shriller. The allies, I suspect, are resolved to execute the design of the mischievous Pitt.

Talleyrand. May it please your majesty to inform me *which* of them; for he formed a thousand, all mischievous, but greatly more mischievous to England than to France. Resolved to seize the sword, in his drunkenness he seized it by the edge and struck at us with the hilt, until he broke it off, and until he himself was exhausted by loss of breath and of blood. We owe alike to him the energy of our armies, the bloody scaffolds of Public Safety, the Reign of Terror, the empire of usurpation; and finally, as the calm is successor to the tempest, and sweet fruit to bitter kernel, the blessing of your Majesty's restoration. Excepting in this one event, he was mischievous to our country; but in all events, and in all undertakings, he was pernicious to his own. No man ever brought into the world such enduring evil; few men such extensive.

Louis. His king ordered it. George III. loved battles and blood.

Talleyrand. But he was prudent in his appetite for them.

Louis. He talked of peppering his people as I would talk of peppering a capon.

Talleyrand. Having split it. His subjects cut up by his subjects were only capers to his leg of mutton. From none of his palaces and parks was there any view so rural, so composing to his spirits, as the shambles. When these were not fresh, the gibbet would do.

I wish better luck to the pheasant-eggs than befell Mr Pitt's designs. Not one brought forth any thing.

Louis. No: but he declared in the face of his Parliament,

and of Europe, that he would insist on indemnity for the past and security for the future. These were his words. Now, all the money and other wealth the French armies levied in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and everywhere else, would scarcely be sufficient for this indemnity.

Talleyrand. England shall never receive from us a tithe or that amount.

Louis. A tithe of it! She may demand a quarter or a third, and leave us wondering at her moderation and forbearance.

Talleyrand. The matter must be arranged immediately, before she has time for calculation or reflection. A new peace maddens England to the same paroxysm as a new war maddens France. She hath sent over hither for minister—or rather her prime minister himself is come to transact all the business—the most ignorant and most short-sighted man to be found in any station of any public office throughout the whole of Europe. He must be treated as her arbiter: we must talk to him of restoring her, of regenerating her, of preserving her, of guiding her, which (we must protest with our hands within our frills) he alone is capable of doing. We must enlarge on his generosity (and generous he indeed is), and there is nothing he will not concede.

Louis. But if they do not come over in a week, we shall lose the season. I ought to be eating a pheasant-poult by the middle of July. Oh! but you were talking to me about the other matter, and perhaps the weightier of the two: ay, certainly. If this indemnity is paid to England, what becomes of our civil list, the dignity of my family and household?

Talleyrand. I do assure your Majesty, England shall never receive—did I say a tithe?—I say she shall never receive a fiftieth of what she expended in the war against us. It would be out of all reason and out of all custom in her to expect it. Indeed, it would place her in almost as good a condition as ourselves. Even if she were beaten, she could hardly hope *that:* she never in the last three centuries has demanded it when she was victorious. Of all the sufferers by the war, we shall be the least.

Louis. The English are calculators and traders.

Talleyrand. Wild speculators, gamblers in trade, who hazard more ventures than their books can register. It will take England some years to cast up the amount of her losses.

Louis. But she, in common with her allies, will insist on our ceding those provinces which my predecessor, Louis XIV., annexed to his kingdom. Be quite certain that nothing short of Alsace, Lorraine, and Franc Comté, will satisfy the German princes. They must restore the German language in those provinces: for languages are the only true boundaries of nations, and there will always be dissension where there is difference of tongue. We must likewise be prepared to surrender the remainder of the Netherlands; not indeed to England, who refused them in the reign of Elizabeth: she wants only Dunkirk, and Dunkirk she will have.

Talleyrand. This seems reasonable: for which reason it must never be. Diplomacy, when she yields to such simple arguments as plain reason urges against her, loses her office, her efficacy, and her name.

Louis. I would not surrender our conquests in Germany, if I could help it.

Talleyrand. Nothing more easy. The Emperor Alexander may be persuaded that Germany united and entire, as she would then become, must be a dangerous rival to Russia.

Louis. It appears to me that Poland will be more so, with her free institutions.

Talleyrand. There is only one statesman in the whole number of those assembled at Paris, who believes that her institutions will continue free; and he would rather they did not: but he stipulates for it, to gratify and mystify the people of England.

Louis. I see this clearly. I have a great mind to send Blacas over to Stowe. I can trust to him to look to the crates and coops, and to see that the pheasants have enough of air and water, and that the governor of Calais finds a commodious place for them to roost in, forbidding the drums to beat and disturb them, evening or morning. The next night, according to my calculation, they repose at Montreuil. I must look at them before they are let loose. I cannot well imagine why the public men employed by England are usually, indeed constantly, so inferior in abilities to those of France, Prussia, Austria, and Russia. What say you, M. Talleyrand?—I do not mean about the pheasants; I mean about the envoys.

Talleyrand. It can only be that I have considered the

subject more frequently and attentively than suited the avocations of your Majesty, that the reason comes out before me clearly and distinctly. The prime ministers, in all these countries, are independent and uncontrolled in the choice of agents. A prime minister in France may perhaps be willing to promote the interests of his own family; and hence he may appoint from it one unworthy of the place. In regard to other families, he cares little or nothing about them, knowing that his power lies in the palace and not in the club-room. Whereas, in England, he must conciliate the great families, the hereditary dependents of his faction, Whig or Tory. Hence even the highest commands have been conferred on such ignorant and worthless men as the Duke of York and the Earl of Chatham, although the minister was fully aware that the honor of his nation was tarnished, and that its safety was in jeopardy, by such appointments. Meanwhile he kept his seat, however, and fed from it his tame creatures in the cub.

Louis. Do you apprehend any danger (talking of cubs) that my pheasants will be bruised against the wooden bars, or suffer by seasickness? I would not command my bishops to offer up public prayers against such contingencies: for people must never have positive evidence that the prayers of the Church can possibly be ineffectual; and we cannot pray for pheasants as we pray for fine weather, by the barometer. We must drop it. Now go on with the others, if you have done with England.

Talleyrand. A succession of intelligent men rule Prussia, Russia, and Austria; because these three are economical, and must get their bread by creeping, day after day, through the hedges next to them, and by filching a sheaf or two, early and late, from cottager or small farmer; that is to say, from free States and petty princes. Prussia, like a mongrel, would fly at the legs of Austria and Russia, catching them with the sack upon their shoulders, unless they untied it and tossed a morsel to her. These great Powers take especial care to impose a protective duty on intellect; to let none enter the country, and none leave it, without a passport. Their diplomatists are as clever and conciliatory as those of England are ignorant and repulsive, who, while they offer an uncounted sum of secret-service money with the left hand, give a sounding slap on the face with the right.

Louis. We, by adopting a contrary policy, gain more information, raise more respect, inspire more awe, and exercise more authority. The weightiest of our disbursements are smiles and flatteries, with a ribbon and a cross at the end of them.

But between the Duke of York and the Earl of Chatham, I must confess, I find very little difference.

Talleyrand. Some, however. The one was only drunk all the evening and all the night; the other was only asleep all the day. The accumulated fogs of Walcheren seem to concentrate in his brain, puffing out at intervals just sufficient to affect with typhus and blindness four thousand soldiers. A cake of powder rusted their musket-pans, which they were too weak to open and wipe. Turning round upon their scanty and mouldy straw, they beheld their bayonets piled together against the green dripping wall of the chamber, which neither bayonet nor soldier was ever to leave again.

Louis. We suffer by the presence of the allied armies in our capital; but we shall soon be avenged, for the English minister in another fortnight will return and remain at home.

Talleyrand. England was once so infatuated as to give up Malta to us, although fifty Gibraltars would be of inferior value to her. Napoleon laughed at her: she was angry; she began to suspect she had been duped and befooled, and she broke her faith.

Louis. For the first time, M. Talleyrand, and with a man who never had any.

Talleyrand. We shall now induce her to evacuate Sicily, in violation of her promises to the people of that island. Faith, having lost her virginity, braves public opinion and never blushes more.

Louis. Sicily is the key to India; Egypt is the lock.

Talleyrand. What, if I induce the minister to restore to us Pondicherry?

Louis. M. Talleyrand! you have done great things, and without boasting. Whenever you do boast, let it be that you will perform only the thing which is possible. The English know well enough what it is to allow us a near standing-place anywhere. If they permit a Frenchman to plant one foot in India, it will upset all Asia before the other touches the ground. It behooves them to prohibit a single one of us from ever landing

on those shores. Improbable as it is that a man uniting to the same degree, as Hyder-Ali did, political and military genius will appear in the world again for centuries, most of the princes are politic, some are brave, and perhaps no few are credulous. While England is confiding in our loyalty, we might expatiate on her perfidy, and our tears fall copiously on the broken sceptre in the dust of Delhi. Ignorant and stupid as the King's ministers may be, the East India Company is well informed on its interests, and alert in maintaining them. I wonder that a republic so wealthy and so wise should be supported on the bosom of royalty. Believe me, her merchants will take alarm, and arouse the nation.

Talleyrand. We must do all we have to do, while the nation is feasting and unsober. It will awaken with sore eyes and stiff limbs.

Louis. Profuse as the English are, they will never cut the bottom of their purses.

Talleyrand. They have already done it. Whenever I look toward the shores of England, I fancy I descry the Danaids there, toiling at the replenishment of their perforated vases, and all the Nereids leering and laughing at them in the mischievous fulness of their hearts.

Louis. Certainly she can do me little harm at present, and for several years to come; but we must always have an eye upon her, and be ready to assert our superiority.

Talleyrand. We feel it. In fifty years, by abstaining from war, we may discharge our debt and replenish our arsenals. England will never shake off the heavy old man from her shoulders. Overladen and morose, she will be palsied in the hand she unremittingly holds up against Ireland. Proud and perverse, she runs into domestic warfare as blindly as France runs into foreign; and she refuses to her subject what she surrenders to her enemy.

Louis. Her whole policy tends to my security.

Talleyrand. We must now consider how your Majesty may enjoy it at home, all the remainder of your reign.

Louis. Indeed you must, M. Talleyrand! Between you and me be it spoken, I trust but little my loyal people; their loyalty being so ebullient that it often overflows the vessel which should contain it, and is a perquisite of scouts and scullions. I do not wish to offend you.

Talleyrand. Really, I can see no other sure method of containing and controlling them than by bastions and redoubts, the whole circuit of the city.

Louis. M. Talleyrand! I will not doubt your sincerity: I am confident you have reserved the whole of it for my service; and there are large arrears. But, M. Talleyrand, such an attempt would be resisted by any people which had ever heard of liberty, and much more by a people which had ever dreamed of enjoying it.

Talleyrand. Forts are built in all directions above Genoa.

Louis. Yes, by her conqueror; not by her king.

Talleyrand. Your Majesty comes with both titles, and rules, like your great progenitor,

"Et par droit de conquête et par droit de naissance."

Louis. True, my arms have subdued the rebellious; but not without great firmness and great valor on my part, and some assistance (however tardy) on the part of my allies. Conquerors must conciliate; fatherly kings must offer digestible spoon-meat to their ill-conditioned children. There would be sad screaming and kicking were I to swaddle mine in stone-work. No, M. Talleyrand; if ever Paris is surrounded by fortifications to coerce the populace, it must be the work of some democrat, some aspirant to supreme power, who resolves to maintain it, exercising a domination too hazardous for legitimacy. I will only scrape from the Chambers the effervescence of superficial letters and of corrosive law.

Talleyrand. Sire! under all their governments, the good people of Paris have submitted to the *octroi*. Now, all complaints, physical or political, arise from the stomach. Were it decorous in a subject to ask a question (however humbly) of his king, I would beg permission to inquire of your Majesty, in your wisdom, whether a bar across the shoulders is less endurable than a bar across the palate? Sire! the French can bear any thing now they have the honor of bowing before your Majesty.

Louis. The compliment is in a slight degree (a *very* slight degree) ambiguous, and (accept in good part my criticism, M. Talleyrand) not turned with your usual grace.

Announce it as my will and pleasure that the Duc de Blacas do superintend the debarkation of the pheasants; and I pray God, M. de Talleyrand, to have you in his holy keeping.

XXVI. ROMILLY AND WILBERFORCE.[1]

Romilly. Indeed, sir, I cannot but suspect that the agitation of this question on the abolition of the slave-trade is countenanced by Mr Pitt chiefly to divert the attention of the people from crying grievances nearer home. Our paupers are increasing daily both in number and in wretchedness; our workhouses, our hospitals, and our jails are crowded and overflowing; our manufactories are almost as stifling as slave-ships, and more immoral; apprentices, milliners, dressmakers, work throughout the greater part of the night, and, at last disabled by toil, take the sorrowful refuge of the street. After so many have coldly repeated that vice leads to misery, is there no generous man who will proclaim aloud that misery leads to vice? We all see it every day; we warn the wretched too late: we are afraid of warning the affluent too soon; we are prodigal of reproaches that make the crushed heart bleed afresh: we think it indecorous to approach the obdurate one, and unsafe to touch it—barbarous and dastardly as we are!

[1] [Romilly first entered Parliament in March 1806 as member for Queenborough. Pitt died in the preceding January. Landor's memory has therefore played him false, when it led him to introduce Romilly and Wilberforce as fellow members of Parliament during Pitt's life. There are two passages in Romilly's autobiography, which are worth quoting to show the relation between the two men. Writing in 1789, Romilly describes Wilberforce's first speech on the slave trade as "an admirable speech which seemed to make a great impression on the House. What he proposes is, that the trade should be totally and immediately abolished." Seventeen years later, Romilly writes: "Wilberforce came and sat by me to-day in the House of Commons and renewed our acquaintance, which has been interrupted (but not by any fault of mine) for I think about nine or ten years." He asked Romilly to speak for his measure on the slave trade, and Romilly adds, "I told him that I would do every thing in my power to ensure the success of the measure, and that, if I found that my speaking on it could be of any use, I would certainly do so." (*See* "Life of Romilly," vol. ii., p. 6). Pitt at first exerted himself in favour of the mitigation of the slave trade, and carried in 1788 a Bill intended to mitigate the horrors of the middle passage. But the fatal influence of the French Revolution came over him; and after 1792 he never in truth cared for any cause but one—and that the suppression of any thing that seemed to him to have the remotest connection with Jacobinism. Works, ii., 1846. Works, iii., 1876.]

Wilberforce. Postponing all these considerations, not immediately applicable to the subject on which, Mr Romilly, I have taken the liberty to knock at your door, I must assure you that my friend Mr Pitt is not only the most unbending and unchanging, but also the most sincere, man living.

Romilly. It is happy when we can think so of any, especially of one in power.

Wilberforce. Do you doubt it?

Romilly. I never oppose, without reluctance, opinion to sentiment; or, when I can help it, a bad opinion to a good one.

Wilberforce. Oh! if you knew him as I do!

Romilly. The thing is impossible.

Wilberforce. Why so? I should be proud to introduce you.

Romilly. The pride would rest entirely apart from me. It may be that coarse metals are less flexible than finer; certain it is that they do not well cohere.

Wilberforce. But on this occasion you invariably vote together.

Romilly. In the House of Commons.

Wilberforce. It is there we must draw up our forces.

Romilly. Do you never doubt however slightly, and only on one occasion, the fidelity of your leader?

Wilberforce. Leader! Mr Romilly! leader! Humble as I am, the humblest indeed of that august assembly, on this question, —on this alone perhaps, yes, certainly on this alone,—I am acknowledged, universally acknowledged, I know too well how unworthily, yet I do know, and God has given me strength and grace to declare it before men, that I, the weakest of his creatures, *there* am leader. It is I, a band of withy, who bind giants; it is I who keep together on this ground the two rival parties; it is I, a potter's vessel, who hold out across the Atlantic the cup of freedom and of fellowship.

Romilly. Certainly you have seconded with admirable zeal the indefatigable Clarkson. Those who run with spirit and celerity have no breath for words: the whole is expended in action.

Wilberforce. Just so with me. However, I can spare a speech of a few hours every session, in expounding the vexations

and evils of slavery, and in showing how opposite it is to Christianity.

Romilly. I am almost a believer in that doctrine.

Wilberforce. Almost?

Romilly. I should be entirely, if many of the most orthodox men in both Houses, including a great part of the bishops, had been assenters.

Wilberforce. Are they not?

Romilly. Apparently, no. Otherwise they would never be absent when the question is discussed, nor would they abstain from a petition to the Crown that a practice so dangerous to salvation, so certain to bring down a curse on the country, be with all expedient speed abolished.

Wilberforce. It is unnecessary for me to defend the conduct of my Right Reverend friends; men of such piety as no other country hath exhibited: but permit me to remark, Mr Romilly, that you yourself betray a lukewarmness in the cause, when you talk of expedient speed. Expedient, indeed! Gracious Jesu! Ought such a crime to be tolerated for one hour? Are there no lightnings in heaven—

Romilly. Probably there are: there were last summer. But I would rather see them purifying the air than scorching the earth before me. My good Mr Wilberforce! abstain, I beseech you, from a species of eloquence in which Mr Sheridan and Mr Pitt excel you, especially when it is late in the evening; at that season such men are usually the most pious. The lightnings of heaven fall as frequently on granaries as on slave-ships. It is better at all times to abstain from expostulating with God; and more especially on the righteousness of his judgments and the delay of his vengeance.

Wilberforce. Mr Romilly! Mr Romilly! the royal psalmist—

Romilly. Was too often like other royal personages, and, with much power of doing evil, was desirous of much more. Whenever we are conscious of such propensities, it would be wiser and more religious to implore of God to pardon than to promote them.

Wilberforce. We must bow to authority in all things.

Romilly. So we hear: but we may be so much in the habit

of bowing as at last to be unable to stand upright. Before we begin at all, it is useful to inquire what is authority. We are accustomed to mistake place and power for it. Now the Devil, on this earth at least, possesses as much power as the Deity, and more place. Unless he did, we tell a manifest lie in every prayer and supplication. For we declare that we are, and always have been, miserable sinners, and that there is no truth in us.

Wilberforce. Ah, my dear sir! You are no theologian, I see. Some of us, by the blessing of God, are under grace; and, once under grace, we are safe. But it is not on this business I visit you. Here we may differ; but on the Abolition we think alike.

Romilly. I am not quite sure of that.

Wilberforce. Indeed! Then, pray, my dear sir, correct your judgment!

Romilly. I have been doing it, to the best of my ability, all my life.

Wilberforce. If you had only clung to the Cross, you would have been sure and steadfast from your very childhood.

Romilly. Alas! I see but one cross remaining on earth, and it is that of the unrepentant thief. What thousands of the most venomous wasps and hornets swarm about it, and fight for its putrescences! The Blessed one was pulled down long ago, indeed soon after its erection, in the scuffle of those who would sell the splinters. Great fortunes are daily made by it, and it maintains as many clerks and treasurers as the South Sea. The money-changers in the Temple of old did at least give change: ours bag the money and say, *Call to-morrow.*

Wilberforce. Unholy as the gains may be, we must not meddle with vested rights and ancient institutions.

Romilly. Then, worthy Mr Wilberforce, let slavery continue; for certainly no institution is more ancient. In this, also, am I to correct my judgment?

Wilberforce. The fact is too true. You were erroneous there only where you differed from me on that subject, which I had examined attentively and minutely.

Romilly. Namely, the Abolition.

Wilberforce. Exactly so.

Romilly. The clearers of ground in the forests of America

clear first the places round about the homestead. On this principle, I would begin to emancipate and enlighten the suffering laborers in my own vicinity. Look at the draught-horses now passing under the window. The first quarter of their lives was given to their growth: plentiful food came before painful service. They are ignorant of our vices, insensible of our affections: ease is all in all to them; and while they want it most, and while it is most profitable or promissory to the master, they enjoy it.

Wilberforce. We then put blinkers before their eyes, that nothing may make them swerve on the road. Here is another act of humanity.

Romilly. If you attempt to put blinkers before the intellectual eye, you only increase its obliquity. Give as much clear-sightedness as possible, give reasonable leisure, or you never will conciliate affection to your institutions. Inflict on men the labor and privations of brutes, and you impress on them the brutal character; render them rationally happy, and they are already on the highway to heaven. No man rationally happy will barter the possession he enjoys for the most brilliant theory; but the unhappy will dream of daggers until he clutches them. If your friend, Mr Pitt, wishes to retard the revolutionary movement, he will not attempt to put the fetter on the white man while you are taking it off the black; he will not bring forward a flogged soldiery to confront an enthusiastical one; he will not display to the vigorous sons of starving yeomen the sight of twenty farmhouses rising up from the ruins of one *chateau*. Peace is easier to retain than to recall.

Wilberforce. Well, Mr Romilly, we are departing a little from the object of my visit: and, if we continue to digress, I am afraid you may not be so entirely at leisure to hear me repeat the speech I have prepared on the Abolition. Your room appears to be well adapted to my voice.

Romilly. Already I have had the benefit of your observations the three last sessions.

Wilberforce. You will hear me again, I confidently hope, with the same pleasure in a very crowded House.

Romilly. You represent a Riding in the county of York.

Wilberforce. I have that honor.

Romilly. To represent a county is not in itself an honor; but it offers opportunities of earning many. Inform your constituents that the slavery in the West Indies is less cruel and pernicious than the slavery in their own parishes; that the condition of the Black is better on the whole than the condition of the pauper in England, and that his children are incomparably more comfortable and happy.

Wilberforce. Lord of mercy! do I hear this from a philanthropist?

Romilly. I venture to assert you do, however deficient I may be in the means of showing it. You might, in any session of Parliament, obtain a majority of votes in favor of a Bill to diminish the hours of a child's labor in factories. Every country gentleman, every peer, would vote that none under his eighth year should be incarcerated in these pesthouses.

Wilberforce. O Sir! is such a word applicable?

Romilly. Precisely; although a pesthouse is usually the appellation of that building which excludes the malady and receives the endangered. From eight years to twelve, I would prohibit a longer daily work than of six hours, with two hours between each three for food and exercise. After the twelfth year, the sexes should not be confounded.

Wilberforce. The first regulation would create much discontent among our wealthiest supporters; and even the parents would object to them.

Romilly. Two signal and sorrowful truths! There are also two additional. They who feel the least for others feel the most for themselves; and the parents who waste away their own strength in gin-shops are ready to waste their children's in factories. If our inconsiderate war and our prodigal expenditure permitted the exercise of policy, we should bethink ourselves that manly hearts and sound bodies are the support of States, not creaking looms nor over-pressed cotton-bags in human shape. We have no right to break down the sinews of the rising generation; we have no right to devote the children of the poor either to Belial or to Moloch. I do care about the Blacks; I do care greatly and anxiously about them: but I would rather that slavery should exist for seven centuries longer in the West Indies, than for seven years longer in Lancashire and Yorkshire. If there be any sin-

cerity in the heart of Mr Pitt, why does he not order his dependants in both Houses (and nearly all are his dependants in both alike) to vote for your motion?

Wilberforce. He wishes us well: but he is aware that a compensation must be made to the masters of the slaves; and he has not money for it.

Romilly. Whose fault is that? He always has found money enough for extending the miseries of other nations and the corruption of his own. By his extravagance and the excess of taxation, he is leading to that catastrophe which he avowed it was his object to prevent.

Wilberforce. God forbid!

Romilly. God has forbidden; but he does not mind that.

Wilberforce. You force me to say, Mr Romilly, what I hope you will not think a personality. The French Revolution was brought about in great measure by the gentlemen of your profession.

Romilly. The people were rendered so extremely poor by the imposts, that there were few litigations in the courts of law. Hence the lawyers, who starved others until now, began to be starved in turn, and incited the people to revolution, that there might be crime and change of property. England has now taken the sins of the world upon her, and pays for all.

Wilberforce. Awful expression! Let us return to the Blacks. It is calculated that twenty millions are requisite to indemnify the slave-holders.

Romilly. Do you wonder, then, that he is evasive?

Wilberforce. I should wonder if a man of his integrity were so upon any occasion. But he has frankly told me that he does not see clearly at what time the measure may be expedient.[2]

Romilly. Every thing can be calculated, except the hour for the abolition of injustice. It is not always in our power to retrace our steps when we have committed it. Nay, sometimes is it re-

[2 "At another of Smith's dinners the conversation turned on Wilberforce; when somebody put the query—'If Wilberforce were compelled to desert either the cause of the slaves, or the party of Mr Pitt, to which would he adhere?' 'Oh,' said Fox, 'he would be for Barabbas.'" (*See* Roger's "Table Talk," p. 82.)]

quisite not only to go on with it, but even to add fresh. We waged a most unnecessary, a most impolitic, a most unjust war against France. Nothing else could have united her people; nothing else could have endangered or have interrupted our commerce. Having taken the American islands from our enemy, we should have exported from them the younger slaves into our own, taking care that the number of females be proportional to the number of males. We should have granted our protection to Brazil and Cuba, on condition that the traffic in African slaves immediately cease, and that every one belonging to Spaniard or Portuguese, who had served fourteen years, should be free. Unhappily we ourselves can do little more at present for our own, without a grievous injustice to a large body of our fellow-subjects. We can, however, place adequate power in the hands of the civil and military governors, authorizing them to grant any slave his freedom who shall be proved to have been cruelly treated by his master. What a curse is it upon us, that at present we neither can make peace nor abolish slavery! We can decree, and we ought instantly, that the importation and sale of slaves do cease at this very hour throughout the world. We can decree, and we ought instantly, that husband and wife be united, and separated no more. We can decree, and ought instantly, that children from seven to ten years of age be instructed one hour daily. But, as things are now constituted, I think I have no right to deprive a proprietor of his property, unless he has forfeited it by a violation of law. To repay me for my protection, and for granting him a monopoly during the war, I would stipulate with him that whoever had served him fourteen years should be emancipated. He should also be obliged to maintain as many females as males, or nearly, and to set apart a plot of ground for every emancipated slave, enough for his support, on lease for life, at such a rent as those deputed by the governor may think reasonable. The proposition of granting twenty, or ten, or five millions to carry into execution the abolition of slavery, by way of indemnity to the slave-holders, is absurd. Abolish all duties of importation and exportation; that will be sufficient. The abolition of the slave-trade is greatly more important than the abolition of slavery in our islands. The traffic can be terminated at once; the servitude but gradually. It is in politics as in diet. They who have committed excesses

cannot become quite temperate at the first perception of their perilous situation. The consequences of a sudden change might be fatal.

Wilberforce. Religion teaches us that we should consent to no truce with sin.

Romilly. We should enter into no engagements with her: but the union is easier than the divorce. There are materials which, being warped, are not to be set right again by a stroke of the hammer, but by temperance and time. Our system of slavery is in this condition. We have done wrong with impunity; we cannot with impunity do right. We wound the State in stripping the individual.

Wilberforce. I would not strip him; I would grant him a fair and full indemnity.

Romilly. What! when all your property is mortgaged? When you are without a hope of redeeming it, and can hardly find wherewithal to pay the interest? If ever you attempt the undertaking, it can be only at the risk of peace.

Wilberforce. I am sorry to find you so despondent.

Romilly. I am more despondent than I have yet appeared to be.

Wilberforce. With what reason?

Romilly. Hostilities having ceased, the people will be clamorous for the removal of many taxes; and some of the most productive will be remitted the first. In my opinion, unwise as was the war, and entered into for the gratification of an old madman who never knew the difference between a battle and a review, and who chuckled at the idea of his subjects being *peppered* when they were *shot;* a war conducted by grasping men, outrageous at the extortion of their compliance, and at the alternative that either their places or their principles must be surrendered,—we nevertheless ought to discharge the debt we contracted, and not to leave the burden for our children. If our affairs are as ill conducted in peace as they are in war, it is greatly to be feared that we may injure the colonist more than we benefit the slave. We may even carry our imprudence so far as to restore to our enemies the lands we have conquered from them, cultivated by Blacks.

Wilberforce. Impossible! Mr Pitt has declared that peace

is never to be signed without indemnity for the past, and security for the future. These are his very words.

Romilly. Not as a politician, but as an arithmetician, he knew when he uttered these words that they never could be accomplished. War is alike the parent and the child of evil. It would surpass your ingenuity, or Mr Pitt's, to discover any whatsoever which does not arise from war, or follow war, or romp and revel in the midst of war. It begins in pride and malice, it continues in cruelty and rapine, it terminates in poverty and oppression. Our bishops, who pray for success in it, are much bolder men than our soldiers, who engage in it bayonet to bayonet. For the soldier fights only against man, and under the command of man: the bishop fights against the command of God, and against God himself. Every hand lifted up in prayer for homicide strikes him in the face.

Wilberforce. Mr Romilly! I entertain a due respect for you, as being eminent in your profession, a member of Parliament, a virtuous and (I hope) a religious man: you would however rise higher in my estimation if you reverenced your superiors.

Romilly. It must be a man immeasurably above me, both in virtue and intellect, whom, knowing my own deficiency, I could reverence. Seldom is it that I quote a verse or a sentiment, but there is in a poet not very original a thought so original, that nobody seems ever to have applied it to himself or others:—

"Below the good how far! how far above the great!"

Wilberforce. There is only one half of it I would hear willingly. When men begin to think themselves above the great, social order is wofully deranged. I deplore the absence of that self-abasement on which is laid the foundation of all Christian virtues.

Romilly. Unless we respect ourselves, our respect for superiors is prone to servility. No man can be thrown by another from such a height as he can throw himself from. I never have observed that a tendency toward the powerful was a sufficient check to spiritual pride; and extremely few have I known, or heard of, who, tossing up their nostrils into the air and giving tongue that

they have hit upon the trail to heaven, could distinguish humility from baseness. Mostly they dirty those they fawn on, and get kicked before they get fed.

Wilberforce. Christianity makes allowances for human infirmity.

Romilly. Christianity, as now practised by the highest of its professors, makes more infirmities than allowances. Can we believe in *their* belief who wallow in wealth and war; in theirs who vote subsidies for slaughter; who speed the slave-ship with their prayers; who bind and lacerate and stifle the helpless wretches they call men and brethren?

Wilberforce. Parliamentary steps must be taken before you can expect to mitigate the curses of war and slavery.

Romilly. By whom first should the steps be taken? Persuade the bishops, if you can, to raise their voices for the double abolition. Let them at least unite and join you in that which, apparently, you have most at heart. In order to effect it gradually, I am ready to subscribe my name to any society, of which the main object shall be the conversion of our spiritual lords to Christianity. The waters of Jordan, which were formerly used for bleaching, serve at present no other purpose than the setting of scarlet and purple.

Wilberforce. There is danger in touching the altar. We may overturn the table and bruise the chalice in attempting any restoration of the structure.

Romilly. Christianity is a plant which grows well from seed, but ill from cuttings: they who have grafted it on a wilding have sometimes succeeded; never they who (as we have) inoculated it on one cracked in the stem and oozing over with foul luxuriance. I do not deny that families and small communities have profited by secession from more corrupt religions; but as soon as ever cities and provinces have embraced the purer creed, ambitious men have always been ready to materialize the word of God, and to raise houses and estates upon it.

Wilberforce. The prosperity of the laborers in Christ's vineyard has excited the envy of the ill-disposed.

Romilly. What prosperity? Success in improving it?

Wilberforce. No, indeed; but their honest earnings.

Romilly. Did the Master pay such earnings to those whose work was harder? Or did he command, or will, that such should be paid on any future day?

Wilberforce. I am sorry, Mr Romilly, that you question and quibble (pardon me the expression) just like those unhappy men, miscalled philosophers, who have brought down the vengeance of Heaven on France,—Voltaire at the head of them.

Romilly. No, indeed; I never have sunned myself on the trim and short grass bordered by the papered pinks and powdered ranunculuses of Voltaire. His pertness is amusing; but I thought it pleasanter to bathe in the deep wisdom of wit running up to its banks through the romantic scenery of Cervantes.

Wilberforce. Little better than infidelity.

Romilly. But not, as infidelity generally is, sterile and flimsy. Christians themselves are all infidels in the sight of some other Christians; and they who come nearest to them are the most obnoxious. Strange interpretation of "Love your neighbor"! If there are grades of belief, there must also be grades of unbelief. The worst of unbelief is that which regrets the goodness of our Heavenly Father, and from which there springs in us a desire of breaking what we cannot bend, and of twisting wire after wire and tying knot after knot in his scourge. Christianity, as I understand it, lies not in belief but in action. That servant is a good servant who obeys the just orders of his master; not he who repeats his words, measures his stature, or traces his pedigree! On all occasions it is well to be a little more than tolerant, especially when a wiser and better man than ourselves thinks differently from us. Religious minds will find an additional reason for their humility, when they observe such excellent men as Borromeo and Fénelon adhering to the religion they were born in, amidst the discussions and commotions of every land around.

Wilberforce. My opinion is that religion should be mixed up in all our institutions, and that it not only should be a part, but the main part, of the State.

Romilly. I am unwilling to obtrude my sentiments on this

question, and even to answer any. For I always have observed that the most religious men become the most impatient in the course of discussion, calling their opponents weak, wavering sceptics, or obstinate, reckless unbelievers. But since the Constitution of our country is involved in it, together with its present defects and future meliorations, I must declare to you my conviction that even the best government and the best religion should be kept apart in their ministries.

In building a house, brick and lime are ingredients. Let the brick be imbedded in the lime reduced to mortar; but if you mix it in the composition of the brick, it swells and cracks and falls to pieces in the kiln.

Wilberforce. That is no argument.

*Romilly.** Arguments cease to be arguments the moment they come home. But this, I acknowledge, is only an illustration. To detain you no longer, Mr Wilberforce, I give you my promise I will attend at the debate, and vote with you. Neither of us can live long enough to see the Africans secure from bondage, or from the violence of tribe against tribe, and from the myriads of other calamities that precede it. Europe is semi-barbarous at the present hour; and, even among the more civilized, one State is as suspicious of another as one Black is of another in the belligerents of Senegal and Gambia. For many years to come, no nation will unite with us in any work or project for the furtherance of our mutual well-being: little then can we expect that Honor, now totally lost sight of on the Continent, will be recognized in a character so novel as the Knight-errant of Humanity.

One more remark at parting; the only one by which in this business I can hope to serve you materially. Permit me to advise you, Mr Wilberforce, to display as small a portion of historical

* Parliament has been proved in our times, and indeed in most others, a slippery foundation for names, although a commodious one for fortunes. But Romilly went into public life with temperate and healthy aspirations. Providence, having blessed him with domestic peace, withheld him from political animosities. He knew that the sweetest fruits grew nearest the ground, and he waited for the higher to fall into his bosom, without an effort or a wish to seize on them. No man whosoever, in our Parliamentary history, has united in more perfect accordance and constancy pure virtue and lofty wisdom.

research as you possibly can, consistently with your eloquence and enthusiasm.

Wilberforce. Why so, Mr Romilly?

Romilly. Because it may counteract your benevolent intentions.

Wilberforce. Nothing shall counteract them.

Romilly. Are you aware to which of our sovereigns we must attribute the deadly curse of African slavery, inasmuch as our country is concerned in it?

Wilberforce. Certainly to none of our justly revered kings can so horrible a crime be imputed, although the royal power, according to the limitations of our Constitution, may have been insufficient to repress it effectively.

Romilly. Queen Elizabeth equipped two vessels for her own sole profit; in which two vessels, escorted by the fleet under the command of Hawkins, were the first unhappy Blacks inveigled from their shores by Englishmen, and doomed to end their lives in servitude. Elizabeth was avaricious and cruel; but a small segment of her heart had a brief sunshine on it, darting obliquely. We are under a king notoriously more avaricious; one who passes without a shudder the gibbets his sign-manual has garnished; one who sees on the field of the most disastrous battles—battles in which he ordered his people to fight his people—nothing else to be regretted than the loss of horses and saddles, of haversacks and jackets. If this insensate and insatiable man even hears that Queen Elizabeth was a slave-dealer, he will assert the inalienable rights of the Crown, and swamp your motion.

XXVII. OLIVER CROMWELL AND SIR OLIVER CROMWELL.[1]

Sir Oliver. How many saints and Zions dost carry under thy cloak, lad? Ay, what dost groan at? What art about to

[1 Sir Oliver Cromwell, the Protector's uncle, was born in 1563. He inherited his father's vast fortune and estates, and, by the profusion of his hospitality, might have well inherited also his father's nickname of "The

be delivered of? Troth, it must be a vast and oddly-shapen piece of roguery which findeth no issue at such capacious quarters. I never thought to see thy face again. Prythee what, in God's name, hath brought thee to Ramsey, fair Master Oliver?

Oliver. In his name verily I come, and upon his errand; and the love and duty I bear unto my godfather and uncle have added wings, in a sort, unto my zeal.

Sir Oliver. Take 'em off thy zeal and dust thy conscience with 'em. I have heard an account of a saint, one Phil Neri, who in the midst of his devotions was lifted up several yards from the ground. Now I do suspect, Nol, thou wilt finish by being a saint of his order; and nobody will promise or wish thee the luck to come down on thy feet again, as he did. So! because a rabble of fanatics at Huntingdon have equipped thee as their representative in Parliament, thou art free of all men's houses, forsooth! I would have thee to understand, sirrah, that thou art fitter for the house they have chaired thee unto than for mine. Yet I do not question but thou wilt be as troublesome and unruly there as here. Did I not turn thee out of Hinchinbrook when thou wert scarcely half the rogue thou art latterly grown up to? And yet wert thou immeasurably too big a one for it to hold.

Oliver. It repenteth me, O mine uncle! that in my boy-hood and youth the Lord had not touched me.

Sir Oliver. Touch thee! thou wast too dirty a dog by half.

Oliver. Yea, sorely doth it vex and harrow me that I was then of ill conditions, and that my name—even your godson's—stank in your nostrils.

Golden Knight." Sir Oliver was always a staunch Royalist. He received his knighthood from Elizabeth; he entertained James more than once with an ostentatious magnificence that much lessened his fortunes, and almost completed his ruin by his contributions to Charles. Landor has founded his Conversation on an anecdote related by Sir Ph Warwick, and given by Forster in his "Life of Cromwell" (p. 87). "While I was about Huntingdon," says he, "visiting old Sir Oliver Cromwell, his uncle and godfather, at his house at Ramsey, he told me this story of his successful nephew and godson; that he visited him with a good strong party of horse, and that he had asked him his blessing, and that the few hours he was there, he would not keep on his hat in his presence; but, at the same time, he not only disarmed, but plundered him: for he took away all his plate." (Works, vol. ii. 1846. Works iii., 1876.)]

Sir Oliver. Ha! polecat! it was not thy name, although bad enough, that stank first; in my house, at least.* But perhaps there are worse maggots in stancher mummeries.

Oliver. Whereas in the bowels of your charity you then vouchsafed me forgiveness, so the more confidently may I crave it now in this my urgency.

Sir Oliver. More confidently! What! hast got more confidence? Where didst find it? I never thought the wide circle of the world had within it another jot for thee. Well, Nol, I see no reason why thou shouldst stand before me with thy hat off, in the courtyard and in the sun, counting the stones in the pavement. Thou hadst some knavery in thy head, I warrant thee. Come, put on thy beaver.

Oliver Uncle Sir Oliver! I know my duty too well to stand covered in the presence of so worshipful a kinsman, who, moreover, hath answered at baptism for my good behavior.

Sir Oliver. God forgive me for playing the fool before him so presumptuously and unprofitably! Nobody shall ever take me in again to do such an absurd and wicked thing. But thou hast some left-handed business in the neighborhood, no doubt, or thou wouldst never more have come under my archway.

Oliver. These are hard times for them that seek peace. We are clay in the hand of the potter.

Sir Oliver. I wish your potters sought nothing costlier, and dug in their own grounds for it. Most of us, as thou sayest, have been upon the wheel of these artificers; and little was left but rags when we got off. Sanctified folks are the cleverest skinners in all Christendom, and their Jordan tans and constringes us to the avoirdupois of mummies.

Oliver. The Lord hath chosen his own vessels.

Sir Oliver. I wish heartily he would pack them off, and send them anywhere on ass-back or cart (cart preferably), to rid our country of 'em. But now again to the point: for if we fall among the potsherds we shall hobble on but lamely. Since thou art raised unto a high command in the army, and hast a dragoon to hold yonder thy solid and stately piece of horse flesh, I cannot but take it into my fancy that thou hast some commission of array or disarray to execute hereabout.

**See* Forster's "Life of Cromwell."

Oliver. With a sad sinking of spirit, to the pitch well-nigh of swounding, and with a sight of bitter tears, which will not be put back nor stayed in anywise, as you bear testimony unto me, Uncle Oliver.

Sir Oliver. No tears, Master Nol, I beseech thee! Wet days, among those of thy kidney, portend the letting of blood. What dost whimper at?

Oliver. That I, that I, of all men living, should be put upon this work!

Sir Oliver. What work, prythee?

Oliver. I am sent hither by them who (the Lord in his loving-kindness having pity and mercy upon these poor realms) do, under his right hand, administer unto our necessities, and righteously command us, *by the aforesaid as aforesaid* (thus runs the commission), hither am I deputed (woe is me!) to levy certain fines in this county, or shire, on such as the Parliament in its wisdom doth style malignants.

Sir Oliver. If there is any thing left about the house, never be over-nice: dismiss thy modesty and lay hands upon it. In this county or shire, we let go the civet-bag to save the weazon.

Oliver. O mine uncle and godfather! be witness for me.

Sir Oliver. Witness for thee! not I, indeed. But I would rather be witness than surety, lad, where thou art docketed.

Oliver. From the most despised doth the Lord ever choose his servants.

Sir Oliver. Then, faith! thou art his first butler.

Oliver. Serving him with humility, I may peradventure be found worthy of advancement.

Sir Oliver. Ha! now if any devil speaks from within thee, it is thy own: he does not sniffle; to my ears he speaks plain English. Worthy or unworthy of advancement, thou wilt attain it. Come in; at least for an hour's rest. Formerly thou knewest the means of setting the heaviest heart afloat, let it be sticking in what mud-bank it might; and my wet-dock at Ramsey is pretty near as commodious as that over yonder at Hinchinbrook was erewhile. Times are changed, and places too: yet the cellar holds good.

Oliver. Many and great thanks! But there are certain men

on the other side of the gate, who might take it ill if I turn away and neglect them.

Sir Oliver. Let them enter also, or eat their victuals where they are.

Oliver. They have proud stomachs: they are recusants.

Sir Oliver. Recusants of what?—of beef and ale? We have claret, I trust, for the squeamish, if they are above the condition of tradespeople. But of course you leave no person of higher quality in the outer court?

Oliver. Vain are they and worldly, although such wickedness is the most abominable in their cases. Idle folks are fond of sitting in the sun: I would not forbid them this indulgence.

Sir Oliver. But who are they?

Oliver. The Lord knows. May be priests, deacons, and such like.

Sir Oliver. Then, sir, they are gentlemen. And the commission you bear from the parliamentary thieves, to sack and pillage my mansion-house, is far less vexatious and insulting to me than your behavior in keeping them so long at my stable-door. With your permission, or without it, I shall take the liberty to invite them to partake of my poor hospitality.

Oliver. But, Uncle Sir Oliver! there are rules and ordinances whereby it must be manifested that they lie under displeasure—not mine—not mine—but my milk must not flow for them.

Sir Oliver. You may enter the house or remain where you are, at your option; I make my visit to these gentlemen immediately, for I am tired of standing. If ever thou reachest my age,* Oliver (but God will not surely let this be), thou wilt know that the legs become at last of doubtful fidelity in the service of the body.

* Sir Oliver, who died in 1655, aged ninety-three, might, by possibility, have seen all the men of great genius, excepting Chaucer and Roger Bacon, whom England has produced from its first discovery down to our own times,—Francis Bacon, Shakspeare, Milton, Newton, and the prodigious shoal that attended these leviathans through the intellectual deep. Newton was but in his thirteenth year at Sir Oliver's death. Raleigh, Spenser, Hooker, Eliot, Selden, Taylor, Hobbes, Sidney, Shaftsbury, and Locke were existing in his lifetime; and several more, who may be compared with the smaller of these.

Oliver. Uncle Sir Oliver! now that, as it seemeth, you have been taking a survey of the court-yard and its contents, am I indiscreet in asking your worship whether I acted not prudently in keeping the *men-at-belly* under the custody of the *men-at-arms?* This pestilence, like unto one I remember to have read about in some poetry of Master Chapman's,* began with the dogs and mules, and afterwards crope up into the breasts of men.

Sir Oliver. I call such treatment barbarous; their troopers will not let the gentlemen come with me into the house, but insist on sitting down to dinner with them. And yet, having brought them out of their colleges, these brutal half-soldiers must know that they are Fellows.

Oliver. Yea, of a truth are they, and fellows well met. Out of their superfluities they give nothing to the Lord or his saints; no, not even stirrup or girth, wherewith we may mount our horses and go forth against those who thirst for our blood. Their eyes are fat, and they raise not up their voices to cry for our deliverance.

Sir Oliver. Art mad? What stirrups and girths are hung up in college halls and libraries? For what are these gentlemen brought hither?

Oliver. They have elected me, with somewhat short of unanimity, not indeed to be one of themselves,—for of that distinction I acknowledge and deplore my unworthiness,—nor indeed to be a poor scholar, to which unless it be a very poor one I have almost as small pretension, but simply to undertake a while the heavier office of burser for them; to cast up their accounts; to overlook the scouring of their plate; and to lay a list thereof, with a few specimens, before those who fight the fight of the Lord, that his saints, seeing the abasement of the proud and the chastisement of worldly-mindedness, may rejoice.

Sir Oliver. I am grown accustomed to such saints and such rejoicings. But little could I have thought, threescore years ago, that the hearty and jovial people of England would ever join in so filching and stabbing a jocularity. Even the petticoated torch-bearers from rotten Rome, who lighted the fagots in Smithfield some years before, if more blustering and cocksy, were less bitter and vulturine. They were all intolerant, but they were not

* Chapman's "Homer," first Book

all hypocritical; they had not always "*The Lord*" in their mouth.

Oliver. According to their own notions, they might have had, at an outlay of a farthing.

Sir Oliver. Art facetious, Nol? for it is as hard to find that out as any thing else in thee; only it makes thee look, at times, a little the grimmer and sourer.

But, regarding these gentlemen from Cambridge. Not being such as, by their habits and professions, could have opposed you in the field, I hold it unmilitary and unmanly to put them under any restraint, and to lead them away from their peaceful and useful occupations.

Oliver. I always bow submissively before the judgment of mine elders; and the more reverentially when I know them to be endowed with greater wisdom, and guided by surer experience than myself. Alas! those collegians not only are strong men, as you may readily see if you measure them round the waistband, but boisterous and pertinacious challengers. When we, who live in the fear of God, exhorted them earnestly unto peace and brotherly love, they held us in derision. Thus far, indeed, it might be an advantage to us, teaching us forbearance and self-seeking; but we cannot countenance the evil spirit moving them thereunto. Their occupations, as you remark most wisely, might have been useful and peaceful, and had formerly been so. Why, then, did they gird the sword of strife about their loins against the children of Israel? By their own declaration, not only are they our enemies, but enemies the most spiteful and untractable. When I came quietly, lawfully, and in the name of the Lord for their plate, what did they? Instead of surrendering it like honest and conscientious men, they attacked me and my people on horseback, with syllogisms and enthymemes, and the Lord knows with what other such gimcracks; such venomous and rankling old weapons as those who have the fear of God before their eyes are fain to lay aside. Learning should not make folks mockers—should not make folks malignants—should not harden their hearts. We came with bowels for them.

Sir Oliver. That ye did! and bowels which would have stowed within them all the plate on board of a galloon. If

tankards and wassail-bowls had stuck between your teeth, you would not have felt them.

Oliver. We did feel them; some at least: perhaps we missed too many.

Sir Oliver. How can these learned societies raise the money you exact from them, beside plate? Dost think they can create and coin it?

Oliver. In Cambridge, Uncle Sir Oliver, and more especially in that college named in honor (as they profanely call it) of the Blessed Trinity, there are great conjurors or chemists. Now the said conjurors or chemists not only do possess the faculty of making the precious metals out of old books and parchments, but out of the skulls of young lordlings and gentle-folks, which verily promise less. And this they bring about by certain gold wires fastened at the top of certain caps. Of said metals, thus devilishly converted, do they make a vain and sumptuous use; so that, finally, they are afraid of cutting their lips with glass. But, indeed, it is high time to call them.

Sir Oliver. Well!—at last thou hast some mercy.

Oliver (*aloud*). Cuffsatan Ramsbottom! Sadsoul Kite-claw! advance! Let every gown, together with the belly that is therein, mount up behind you and your comrades in good fellowship. And forasmuch as you at the country-places look to bit and bridle, it seemeth fair and equitable that ye should leave unto them, in full propriety, the mancipular office of discharging the account. If there be any spare beds at the inns, allow the doctors and dons to occupy the same,—they being used to lie softly; and be not urgent that more than three lie in each,—they being mostly corpulent. Let pass quietly and unreproved any light bubble of pride or impetuosity, seeing that they have not always been accustomed to the service of guards and ushers. The Lord be with ye!—Slow trot! And now, Uncle Sir Oliver, I can resist no longer your loving-kindness. I kiss you, my godfather, in heart's and soul's duty; and most humbly and gratefully do I accept of your invitation to dine and lodge with you, albeit the least worthy of your family and kinsfolk. After the refreshment of needful food, more needful prayer, and that sleep which descendeth on the innocent like the

dew of Hermon, to-morrow at daybreak I proceed on my journey Londonward.

Sir Oliver (*aloud*). Ho, there! (*To a servant.*) Let dinner be prepared in the great dining-room; let every servant be in waiting, each in full livery; let every delicacy the house affords be placed upon the table in due courses; arrange all the plate upon the sideboard: a gentleman by descent—a stranger—has claimed my hospitality. (*Servant goes.*)

Sir! you are now master. Grant me dispensation, I entreat you, from a further attendance on you.

XXVIII. ADMIRAL BLAKE AND HUMPHREY BLAKE.[1]

Blake. Humphrey! it hath pleased God, upon this day, to vouchsafe unto the English arms a signal victory. Brother! it grieves my heart that neither of us can rejoice in it as we should do. Evening is closing on the waters: our crews are

[1] On the story on which Landor has founded this Conversation, see the "Life of Blake" in the "Dictionary of National Biography," by Prof. Laughton. There is absolutely no foundation for the story; the version of it given by Landor has, however, a curious history. Robert Blake, the admiral, had two brothers, Benjamin and Humphrey. The former of these was in the naval service, and seems to have been a troublesome man to deal with. In 1652 he was present at the battle in the Downs, and for some misconduct there was, by an order of Council, 29 Jan. 165$\frac{2}{3}$, dismissed from the service, though, as appears by a minute on a subsequent date, no crime was alleged against him (State Papers—Domestic Series). At a later date (1659) he seems to have been employed again in the West Indies under Admiral Goodson, who was compelled to send him back to England for insubordination (see S. Goodson in "Dictionary of National Biography"). One or the other of these instances of misconduct was transferred by his earlier biographers to Santa Cruz; the biography, from which Johnson took the facts for his "Life of Blake," mentions the matter very slightly, and only calls the errant brother Mr Blake. But in a grub-street publication (about 1750), entitled "The History and Life of Robert Blake," &c., there is a long and dramatic account of the incident; though even here no name is given. It was reserved for Mr Hepworth Dixon ("Life of Blake," 1852) to affix the discredit to Humphrey Blake, and to add other touching details to the story. This he has done with an air of historic truth

returning thanks and offering up prayers to the Almighty. Alas! Alas! that we, who ought to be the most grateful for his protection, and for the spirit he hath breathed into our people, should be the only men in this vast armament whom he hath sorely chastened!—that we of all others should be ashamed to approach the throne of grace among our countrymen and comrades! There are those who accuse you, and they are brave and honest men—there are those, O Humphrey! Humphrey!—was the sound ever heard in our father's house?—who accuse you, brother! brother!—how can I ever find utterance for the word?—yea, of cowardice.

Stand off! I want no help: let me be.

Humphrey. To-day, for the first time in my life, I was in the midst of many ships of superior force firing upon mine, at once and incessantly.

Blake. The very position where most intrepidity was required. Were none with you?—were none in the same danger? Shame, shame! You owed many an example, and you defrauded them of it. They could not gain promotion, the poor seamen! they could not hope for glory in the wide world: example they might have hoped for. You would not have robbed them of their prize-money—

Humphrey. Brother! was ever act of dishonesty imputed to a Blake?

Blake.—Until now. You have robbed them even of the chance they had of winning it; you have robbed them of the pride, the just and chastened pride, awaiting them at home; you have robbed their children of their richest inheritance, a father's good repute.

Humphrey. Despite of calumniators, there are worthy men ready to speak in my favor, at least in extenuation—

Blake. I will hear them, as becomes me, although I myself am cognizant of your default; for during the conflict how anxiously, as often as I could, did I look toward your frigate!

calculated to deceive the most critical. The fact that Landor calls the erring brother Humphrey, proves that it was from Hepworth Dixon's "Life of Blake" that he derived the materials for this Conversation. A reference to that book will show other points of similarity. ("Last Fruit," 1853. Works, iii., 1876.)]

Especial care could not be fairly taken that aid at the trying moment should be at hand: other vessels were no less exposed than yours; and it was my duty to avoid all partiality in giving my support.

Humphrey. Grievous as my short-coming may be, surely I am not precluded from what benefit the testimony of my friends may afford me.

Blake. Friends!—ah, thou hast many, Humphrey! and many hast thou well deserved. In youth, in boyhood, in childhood, thy honied temper brought ever warm friends about thee. Easiness of disposition conciliates bad and good alike; it draws affections to it, and relaxes enmities: but that same easiness renders us, too often, negligent of our graver duties. God knows, I may without the same excuse (if it is any) be impeached of negligence in many of mine; but never where the honor or safety of my country was concerned. Wherefore the Almighty's hand, in this last battle, as in others no less prosperous, hath conducted and sustained me.

Humphrey! did thy heart wax faint within thee through want of confidence in our sole Deliverer?

Humphrey. Truly I have no such plea.

Blake. It were none; it were an aggravation.

Humphrey. I confess I am quite unable to offer any adequate defence for my backwardness, my misconduct. Oh! could the hour return, the battle rage again! How many things are worse than death!—how few things better! I am twelve years younger than you are, brother, and want your experience.

Blake. Is that your only want? Deplorable is it to know, as now I know, that you will never have it, and that you will have a country which you can never serve.

Humphrey. Deplorable it is, indeed. God help me!

Blake. Worse evil soon may follow,—worse to me, remembering thy childhood. Merciful Father! after all the blood that hath been shed this day, must I devote a brother's?

Humphrey. O Robert!—always compassionate, always kind and generous!—do not inflict on yourself so lasting a calamity, so unavailing a regret!

Listen!—not to me—but listen. I hear under your bow the sound of oars. I hear them drawn into boats: verily do I

believe that several of the captains are come to intercede for me, as they said they would do.

Blake. Intercession is vain. Honorable men shall judge you. A man to be honorable must be strictly just, at the least. Will brave men spare you? It lies with them. Whatever be their sentence, my duty is (God give me strength!) to execute it. Gentlemen! who sent for you? [*Officers come aboard.*

Senior Officer. General! we, the captains of your fleet, come before you upon the most painful of duties.

Blake (*to himself*). I said so: his doom is sealed. (*To Senior Officer.*) Speak, sir! speak out, I say. A man who hath fought so bravely as you have fought to-day ought never to hesitate and falter.

Senior Officer. General! we grieve to say that Captain Humphrey Blake, commanding a frigate in the service of the Commonwealth, is accused of remissness in his duty.

Blake. I know it. Where is the accuser? What! no answer from any of you? Then I am he. Captain Humphrey Blake is here impleaded of neglecting to perform his uttermost in the seizure or destruction of the enemy's galloons. Is the crime —write it, write it down!—no need to speak it here—capital? Negligence? no worse? But worse can there be?

Senior Officer. We would humbly represent—

Blake. Representations, if made at all, must be made elsewhere. He goes forthwith to England. Return each of you to his vessel. Delinquency, grave delinquency, there hath been, of what nature and to what extent you must decide. Take him away. (*Alone.*) Just God! am I the guilty man, that I should drink to the very dregs such a cup of bitterness?

Forgive, forgive, O Lord! the sinful cry of thy servant! Thy will be done! Thou hast shown thy power this day, O Lord! now show, and make me worthy of, thy mercy! *

* Various and arduous as were Blake's duties, such on all occasions were his circumspection and discretion, that no fault could be detected or invented in him. His victories were won against all calculation but his own. Recollecting, however late, his services; recollecting that in private life, in political, in military, his purity was ever the same,—England will place Robert Blake the foremost and the highest of her defenders. He was the archetype of her Nelsons, Collingwoods, and Pellews. Of all the men that ever bore a sword, none was worthier of that awful trust.



DIALOGUES OF LITERARY MEN.

DIALOGUES OF LITERARY MEN.

I. LORD BROOKE AND SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.*

Brooke. I come again unto the woods and unto the wilds of Penshurst, whither my heart and the friend of my heart have long invited me.

Sidney. Welcome, welcome! How delightful[1] it is to see a friend after a length of absence! How delightful to chide him for that length of absence, to which we owe such delight!

Brooke. I know not whether our names will be immortal; I am sure our friendship will. For names sound only upon the surface of the earth, while friendships are the purer and the more ardent the nearer they come to the presence of God, the sun not only of righteousness but of love. Ours never has been chipped or dimmed even here, and never shall be.

Sidney. Let me take up your metaphor. Friendship is a

* Lord Brooke is less known than the personage with whom he converses, and upon whose friendship he had the virtue and good sense to found his chief distinction. On his monument at Warwick, written by himself, we read that he was servant of Queen Elizabeth, counsellor of King James, and friend of Sir Philip Sidney. His style is stiff, but his sentiments are sound and manly. The same house produced another true patriot, slain in the civil wars by a shot from Lichfield minster. Clarendon, without any ground for his assertion, says there is reason to believe he would have abandoned his party and principles. The family is extant: a member of it was created Earl of Warwick by George II. for services as Lord of the Bedchamber. [(Imag. Convers., i., 1824. i., 1826. Works, i., 1846. Works, iv., 1876.)]

[1 From "How" to "never" (16 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

vase which, when it is flawed by heat or violence or accident, may as well be broken at once; it can never be trusted after. The more graceful and ornamental it was, the more clearly do we discern the hopelessness of restoring it to its former state. Coarse stones, if they are fractured, may be cemented again; precious ones, never. And now Greville, seat yourself under this oak; since, if you had hungered or thirsted from your journey, you would have renewed the alacrity of your old servants in the hall.

Brooke. In truth I did; for no otherwise the good household would have it. The birds met me first, affrightened by the tossing up of caps; and by these harbingers I knew who were coming. When my palfrey eyed them askance for their clamorousness, and shrank somewhat back, they quarrelled with him almost before they saluted me, and asked him many pert questions. What a pleasant spot, Sidney, have you chosen here for meditation! A solitude is the audience-chamber of God. Few days in our year are like this: there is a fresh pleasure in every fresh posture of the limbs, in every turn the eye takes.

> Youth! credulous of happiness, throw down
> Upon this turf thy wallet,—stored and swoln
> With morrow-morns, bird-eggs, and bladders burst,—
> That tires thee with its wagging to and fro:
> Thou too wouldst breathe more freely for it, Age!
> Who lackest heart to laugh at life's deceit.

It sometimes requires a stout push, and sometimes a sudden resistance, in the wisest men, not to become for a moment the most foolish. What have I done? I have fairly challenged you, so much my master.

Sidney. You have warmed me: I must cool a little and watch my opportunity. So now, Greville, return you to your invitations, and I will clear the ground for the company; for Youth, for Age, and whatever comes between, with kindred and dependencies. Verily we need no taunts like those in your verses: here we have few vices, and consequently few repinings. I take especial care that my young laborers and farmers shall never be idle, and I supply them with bows and

arrows, with bowls and ninepins, for their Sunday evening,* lest they drink and quarrel. In church they are taught to love God; after church they are practised to love their neighbor: for business on work-days keeps them apart and scattered, and on market-days they are prone to a rivalry bordering on malice, as competitors for custom. Goodness does not more certainly make men happy than happiness makes them good. We must distinguish between felicity and prosperity; for prosperity leads often to ambition, and ambition to disappointment: the course is then over; the wheel turns round but once; while the reaction of goodness and happiness is perpetual.

Brooke. You reason justly and you act rightly. Piety,—warm, soft, and passive as the ether round the throne of Grace,—is made callous and inactive by kneeling too much: her vitality faints under rigorous and wearisome observances. A forced match between a man and his religion sours his temper, and leaves a barren bed.

Sidney. Desire of lucre, the worst and most general country vice, arises here from the necessity of looking to small gains; it is, however, but the tartar that encrusts economy.[3]

Brooke. I fear Avarice less from himself than from his associates, who fall upon a man the fiercest in old age. Avarice (allow me to walk three paces further with Allegory) is more

* Censurable as this practice may appear, it belonged to the age of Sidney. Amusements were permitted the English on the seventh day, nor were they restricted until the Puritans gained the ascendency. Even labor on certain occasions was not only allowed but enjoined. By an order of Edward VI., the farmer was encouraged to harvest upon the Sunday, and in the same article it is called a great offence to God to be scrupulous and superstitious in foregoing such operations. Aylmer, Bishop of London, used to play at bowls after the service; and, according to Strype, when the good prelate was censured for it, he replied that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

[3 First ed. reads: "economy

. . . Avarice.

Grudges . . . . . blood.

Brooke. Oh that . . . blessings! The herbs are crisp and elastic with health; they are warm under my hand as if their veins were filled with such a fluid as ours. What a hum," &c.]

[2 Note added in 2nd ed. and enlarged in 3rd ed.]

unlovely than mischievous, although one may say of him that he at last

> Grudges the gamesome river-fish its food,
> And shuts his heart against his own life's blood.

Sidney. We find but little of his handiwork among the yeomanry, nor indeed much among those immediately above. The thriving squires are pricked and pinched by their eagerness to rival in expenditure those of somewhat better estate; for, as vanity is selfishness, the vain are usually avaricious, and they who throw away most exact most. Penurious men are oftener just than spendthrifts.

Brooke. Oh that any thing so monstrous should exist in this profusion and prodigality of blessings! The herbs, elastic with health, seem to partake of sensitive and animated life, and to feel under my hand the benediction I would bestow on them. What a hum of satisfaction in God's creatures! How is it, Sidney, the smallest do seem the happiest?

Sidney. Compensation for their weaknesses and their fears; compensation for the shortness of their existence. Their spirits mount upon the sunbeam above the eagle; and they have more enjoyment in their one summer than the elephant in his century.

Brooke. Are not also the little and lowly in our species the most happy?

Sidney. I would not willingly try nor over-curiously examine it. We, Greville, are happy in these parks and forests: we were happy in my close winter-walk of box and laurustine.[4] In our earlier days did we not emboss our bosoms with the daffodils, and shake them almost unto shedding with our transport? Ay, my friend, there is a greater difference, both in the stages of life and in the seasons of the year, than in the conditions of men: yet the healthy pass through the seasons, from the clement to the inclement, not only unreluctantly but rejoicingly, knowing that the worst will soon finish, and the best begin anew; and we are desirous of pushing forward into every stage of life, excepting that alone which ought reasonably to allure us most, as opening to us the *Via Sacra*, along which we move in triumph to our eternal country. We[5] labor to get through the moments of our

[4 First ed. reads: "laurustinus and mezereon."]
[5 From "We" to "us" (6 lines) added in 2nd ed. Four lines below,

life, as we would to get through a crowd. Such is our impatience, such our hatred of procrastination, in every thing but the amendment of our practices and the adornment of our nature, one would imagine we were dragging Time along by force, and not he us. We may in some measure frame our minds for the reception of happiness, for more or for less; we should, however, well consider to what port we are steering in search of it, and that even in the richest its quantity is but too exhaustible. It is easier to alter the modes and qualities of it, than to increase its stores. There is a sickliness in the firmest of us, which induceth us to change our side, though reposing ever so softly: yet, wittingly or unwittingly, we turn again soon into our old position. Afterward,[6] when we have fixed, as we imagine, on the object most desirable, we start extravagantly; and, blinded by the rapidity of our course toward the treasure we would seize and dwell with, we find another hand upon the lock—the hand of one standing in shade:—'tis Death.

Brooke. There is often a sensibility in poets which precipitates 'em thither.

> The winged head of Genius snakes surround,
> As erewhile poor Medusa's.

We, however, have defences against the shafts of the vulgar, and such as no position could give.

Sidney. God hath granted unto both of us hearts easily contented, hearts fitted for every station, because fitted for every duty. What appears the dullest may contribute most to our genius; what is most gloomy may soften the seeds and relax the fibres of gayety.[7] We enjoy the solemnity of the spreading oak above us: perhaps we owe to it in part the mood of our minds at this instant; perhaps an inanimate thing supplies me, while I am speaking, with whatever I possess of animation. Do you imagine that any contest of shepherds can afford them the same pleasure as I receive from the description of it; or that even in their loves, however innocent and faithful, they are so free from anxiety as I

1st ed. reads: "richest we shall find but a circumscribed and very exhaustible quantity." From "It" to "stores" (3 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

[6 From "Afterward" to "Death" (5 lines) added in 2nd ed. From "*Brooke*" to "*Sidney*" (6 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[7 First ed. reads: "gaiety. Sometimes we are insensible to its kindlier influence, sometimes not We enjoy," &c.]

am while I celebrate them? The exertion of intellectual power, of fancy and imagination, keeps from us greatly more than their wretchedness, and affords us greatly more than their enjoyment. We are motes in the midst of generations: we have our sunbeams to circuit and climb. Look at the summits of the trees around us, how they move, and the loftiest the most: nothing is at rest within the compass of our view, except the gray moss on the park-pales. Let it eat away the dead oak, but let it not be compared with the living one.

Poets are in general prone to melancholy; yet the most plaintive ditty hath imparted a fuller joy, and of longer duration, to its composer, than the conquest of Persia to the Macedonian. A bottle of wine bringeth as much pleasure as the acquisition of a kingdom, and not unlike it in kind: the senses in both cases are confused and perverted.

Brooke. Merciful Heaven! and for the fruition of an hour's drunkenness, from which they must awaken with heaviness, pain, and terror, men consume a whole crop of their kind at one harvest-home. Shame upon those light ones who carol at the feast of blood! and worse upon those graver ones who nail upon their escutcheon the name of great! Ambition is but Avarice on stilts and masked. God sometimes sends a famine, sometimes a pestilence, and sometimes a hero, for the chastisement of mankind: none of them surely for our admiration. Only some cause like unto that which is now scattering the mental fog of the Netherlands, and is preparing them for the fruits of freedom, can justify us in drawing the sword abroad.

Sidney. And only the accomplishment of our purpose can permit us again to sheathe it; for the aggrandizement of our neighbor is nought of detriment to us: on the contrary, if we are honest and industrious, his wealth is ours. We have nothing to dread while our laws are equitable and our impositions light: but children fly from mothers who strip and scourge them.

Brooke.[8]

> Across the hearse where homebred Law lies dead
> Strides Despotism, and seems a bloated boy,
> Who, while some coarse clown drives him, thinks he drives,
> Shouting, with blear, bluff face, *Give way, give way!*

[8 From "*Brooke*" to "*way*" (5 lines) added in 2nd ed. Five lines below, "*Sidney*" added in 2nd ed.]

We are come to an age when we ought to read and speak plainly what our discretion tells us is fit: we are not to be set in a corner for mockery and derision, with our hands hanging down motionless, and our pockets turned inside-out.

Sidney. Let us congratulate our country on her freedom from debt, and on the economy and disinterestedness of her administrators; men altogether of eminent worth, afraid of nothing but of deviating from the broad and beaten path of illustrious ancestors, and propagating her glory in far-distant countries, not by the loquacity of mountebanks or the audacity of buffoons, nor by covering a tarnished sword-knot with a trim shoulder-knot, but by the mission of right-learned, grave, and eloquent ambassadors. Triumphantly and disdainfully may you point to others.

While the young blossom starts to light,
And heaven looks down serenely bright
On Nature's graceful form;
While hills and vales and woods are gay,
And village voices all breathe May,
Who dreads the future storm?

Where princes smile and senates bend,
What mortal e'er foresaw his end,
Or fear'd the frown of God?
Yet has the tempest swept them off,
And the oppressed with bitter scoff
Their silent marble trod.

To swell their pride, to quench their ire,
Did venerable Laws expire
And sterner forms arise;
Faith in their presence veiled her head,
Patience and Charity were dead,
And Hope beyond the skies.

But away, away with politics: let not this city-stench infect our fresh country-air!

Brooke. To happiness then, and unhappiness too, since we can discourse upon it without emotion. I[9] know not, Philip, how it is, but certainly I have never been more tired with any reading than with dissertations upon happiness, which seems not only to elude inquiry, but to cast unmerciful loads of clay and sand and

[9 From "I" to "acknowledged" (86 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

husks and stubble along the high road of the inquirer. Theologians and moralists, and even sound philosophers, talk mostly in a drawling and dreaming way about it. He who said that virtue alone is happiness would have spoken more truly in saying that virtue alone is misery, if *alone* means *singly*; for, beyond a doubt, the virtuous man meets with more opposites and opponents than any other, meets with more whose interests and views thwart his, and whose animosities are excited against him, not only by the phantom of interest but by envy. Virtue alone can rebuff them; nor can the virtuous man, if only virtuous, live under them,—I will not say contentedly and happily, I will say,—at all. Self-esteem, we hear, is the gift of virtue, the golden bough at which the gates of Elysium fly open; but, alas! it is oftener, I am afraid, the portion of the strong-minded, and even of the vain, than of the virtuous. By the constant exertion of our best energies we can keep down many of the thorns along the path of life; yet some will thwart us, whether we carry our book with us or walk without it, whether we cast our eyes on earth or on heaven. He who hath given the best definition of most things hath given but an imperfect one here, informing us that a happy life is one without impediment to virtue.* A happy life is not made up of negatives. Exemption from one thing is not possession of another. Had I been among his hearers, and could have uttered my sentiments in the presence of so mighty a master, I would have told him that the definition is still unfound, like the thing.

A sound mind and sound body, which many think all-sufficient, are but receptacles for it. Happiness, like air and water, the other two great requisites of life, is composite. One kind of it suits one man, another kind another. The elevated mind takes in and breathes out again that which would be uncongenial to the baser; and the baser draws life and enjoyment from that which would be putridity to the loftier. Wise or unwise, who doubts for a moment that contentment is the cause of happiness? Yet the inverse is true: we are contented because we are happy, and not happy because we are contented. Well-regulated minds may be satisfied with a small portion of happiness; none can be happy with a small portion of content. In fact, hardly any thing which

* Aristoteles says in his "Ethics," and repeats it in his "Polity," *εὐδαίμονα βίον εἶναι τὸν κατ' ἀρετὴν ἀνεμπόδιστον.*

we receive for truth is really and entirely so, let it appear as plain as it may, and let its appeal be not only to the understanding but to the senses; for our words do not follow them exactly, and it is by words we receive truth and express it.

I do not wonder that in the cloud of opinions and of passions (for where there are many of the one, there are usually some of the other) the clearer view of this subject should be intercepted: rather is it to be marvelled at, that no plain reasoning creature should in his privacy have argued thus:—

"I am without the things which do not render those who possess them happier than I am; but I have those the absence of which would render me unhappy: and therefore the having of them should, if my heart is a sound one and my reason unperverted, render me content and blest! I have a house and garden of my own; I have competence; I have children. Take away any of these, and I should be sorrowful, I know not how long: give me any of those which are sought for with more avidity, and I doubt whether I should be happier twenty-four hours. He who has very much of his own always has a project in readiness for somewhat of another's: he who has very little has not even the ground on which to lay it. Thus one sharp angle of wickedness and disquietude is broken off from him."

Sidney. Since we have entered into no contest or competition which of us shall sing or sermonize the other fast asleep, and since we rather throw out than collect ideas on the subject of our conversation, do not accuse me of levity—I am certain you will not of irreligion—if I venture to say that comforts and advantages, in this life, appear at first sight to be distributed by some airy, fantastic Beings, such as figure in the stories of the East. These generally choose a humpback slave or inconsiderate girl to protect and countenance: in like manner do we observe the ill-formed mind and unstable character most immediately under the smiles of Fortune and the guidance of Prosperity; who, as the case is with lovers, are ardent and attached in proportion as they alight upon indifference and inconstancy.

Brooke. Yes, Happiness dotes on her works, and is prodigal to her favorite. As one drop of water hath an attraction for another, so do felicities run into felicities. This course is marked by the vulgar with nearly the same expression as I have employed

upon it: men say habitually, *A run of luck*. And I wish that misfortunes bore no resemblance to it in their march and tendency; but these also swarm and cluster and hang one from another, until at last some hard day deadens all sense in them, and terminates their existence.

Sidney. It must be acknowledged our unhappiness appears to be more often sought by us, and pursued more steadily, than our happiness. What courtier on the one side, what man of genius on the other, has not complained of unworthiness preferred to worth? Who prefers it?—his friend? no: himself? no, surely. Why, then, grieve at folly or injustice in those who have no concern in him, and in whom he has no concern? We are indignant at the sufferings of those who bear bravely and undeservedly; but a single cry from them breaks the charm that bound them to us.

The English character stands high above complaining. I have, indeed, heard the soldier of our enemy scream at receiving a wound; I never heard ours. Shall the uneducated be worthy of setting an example to the lettered? If we see, as we have seen, young persons of some promise, yet in comparison to us as the colt is to the courser, raised to trust and eminence by a powerful advocate, is it not enough to feel ourselves the stronger men, without exposing our limbs to the passenger, and begging him in proof to handle our muscles? Those who distribute offices are sometimes glad to have the excuse of merit; but never give them for it. Only one subject of sorrow, none of complaint, in respect to court, is just and reasonable; namely, to be rejected or overlooked when our exertions or experience might benefit our country. Forbidden to unite our glory with hers, let us cherish it at home the more fondly for its disappointment, and give her reason to say afterward she could have wished the union.[10] He who complains deserves what he complains of.

Religions, languages, races of men, rise up, flourish, decay; and just in the order I assign to them. O my friend! is it nothing to think that this hand of mine, over which an insect is creeping, and upon which another more loathsome one ere long will pasture, may hold forth to my fellow-men, by resolution of heart in me and perseverance, those things which shall outlive the least perishable in the whole dominion of mortality? Creatures, of whom

[10 See note at end. From "He" to "of" (2 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

the best and weightiest part are the feathers in their caps, and of whom the lightest are their words and actions, curl their whiskers and their lips in scorn upon similar meditations.

Let us indulge in them; they are neither weak nor[11] idle, having been suckled by Wisdom and taught to walk by Virtue. We have never thrown away the keepsakes that Nature has given us, nor bartered them for toys easily broken in the public paths of life.

Brooke. Argue, then, no longer about courts and discontents: I would rather hear a few more verses; for a small draught increases the thirst of the thirsty.

Sidney. To write as the ancients have written, without borrowing a thought or expression from them, is the most difficult thing we can achieve in poetry. I attempt no composition which I foresee will occupy more than an hour or two, so that I can hardly claim any rank among the poets; yet having once collected, in my curiosity, all the *Invocations to Sleep*, ancient and modern, I fancied it possible to compose one very differently; which, if you consider the simplicity of the subject and the number of those who have treated it, may appear no easy matter.

Sleep! who contractest the waste realms of Night,
None like the wretched can extol thy powers:
We think of thee when thou art far away,
We hold thee dearer than the light of day,
And most when Love forsakes us wish thee ours:
Oh hither bend thy flight!

Silent and welcome as the blessed shade
Alcestis to the dark Thessalian hall,
When Hercules and Death and Hell obey'd
Her husband's desolate despondent call.

What fiend would persecute thee, gentle Sleep
Or beckon thee aside from man's distress?
Needless it were to warn thee of the stings
That pierce my pillow, now those waxen wings
Which bore me to the sun of happiness,
Have dropp'd into the deep.

Brooke. If I cannot compliment you, as I lately compli-

[11 Second ed. reads: "They are not weak; suckled by Wisdom, taught to walk by Virtue." From "We" to "life" (3 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

mented a poet on the same subject, by saying, *May all the gods and goddesses be as propitious to your Invocation*, let me at least congratulate you that everything here is fiction.

Sidney. There[12] are sensible men who would call me to an account for attempting to keep up with the ancients, and then running down-hill among the moderns; and more especially for expatiating in the regions of Romance. The fastidious and rigid call it bad taste: and I am afraid they have Truth for their prompter. But this, I begin to suspect, is rather from my deficiency of power and judgment, than because the thing in itself is wrong. Chivalry in the beginning was often intemperate and inhumane; afterward the term became synonymous with valorous courtesy: writers, and the public after them, now turn it into ridicule. But there is surely an incentive to noble actions in the deference we bear toward our ladies; and to carry it in my bosom is worth to me all the applauses I could ever receive from my prince. If the beloved keep us from them farther than arm's length for years together, much indeed we regret that our happiness is deferred, but more that theirs is. For pride, and what is better than pride, our pure conscience, tells us that God would bestow on us the glory of creating it; of all terrestrial glory far the greatest.

Brooke. To those whose person and manners, and exalted genius, render them always and everywhere acceptable, it is pleasing to argue in this fashion.

Sidney. Greville! Greville! it is better to suffer than to lose the power of suffering. The perception of beauty, grace, and virtue is not granted to all alike. There are more who are contented in an ignoble union on the flat beaten earth before us, than there are who, equally disregarding both unfavorable and favorable clamors, make for themselves room to stand on an elevated and sharp-pointed summit, and thence to watch the motions and scintillations, and occasional overcloudings of some bright distant star. Is it nothing to have been taught, apart from the vulgar, those graceful submissions which afford us a legitimate pride when we render them to the worthy? Is there no privilege in electing our own sovereign? no pleasure in bending heart and soul before her? I will never believe that age itself

[12 From "There" to "reception" (41 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

can arrest so vivid an emotion, or that his death-bed is hard or uneasy, who can bring before it even the empty image he has long (though in vain) adored. That life has not been spent idly, which has been mainly spent in conciliating the generous affections by such studies and pursuits as best furnish the mind for their reception. How many, who have abandoned for public life the studies of philosophy and poetry, may be compared to brooks and rivers which in the beginning of their course have assuaged our thirst, and have invited us to tranquillity by their bright resemblance of it, and which afterward partake the nature of that vast body whereinto they run,—its dreariness, its bitterness, its foam, its storms, its everlasting noise and commotion! I have known several such; and when I have innocently smiled at them, their countenances seemed to say, "I wish I could despise you: but alas! I am a runaway slave, and from the best of mistresses to the worst of masters; I serve at a tavern where every hour is dinner-time, and pick a bone upon a silver dish." And what is acquired by the more fortunate among them? They may put on a robe and use a designation which I have no right to: my cook and footman may do the same; one has a white apron, the other has red hose: I should be quite as much laughed at if I assumed them. A sense of inferior ability is painful: this I feel most at home. I could not do nearly so well what my domestics do; what the others do, I could do better. My blushes are not at the superiority I have given myself, but at the comparison I must go through to give it.[13]

Two poets cannot walk or sit together easily while they have any poetry about them: they must turn it out upon the table or the grass or the rock or the roadside. I shall call on you presently; take all I have in the mean while.

Afar behind is gusty March!
Again beneath a wider arch
The birds, that fear'd grim winter, fly:
O'er every pathway trip along
Light feet, more light with frolic song,
And eyes glance back, they know not why.

Say, who is that of leaf so rank,
Pushing the violet down the bank

[13 See note at end.]

With hearted spearhead glossy-green?
And why that changeface mural box
Points at the myrtle, whom he mocks,
Regardless what her cheer hath been?

The fennel waves her tender plume;
Mezereons cloth'd with thick perfume
And almonds, urge the lagging leaf:
Ha! and so long then have I stood
And not observ'd thee, modest bud,
Wherefrom will rise their lawful chief

Oh never say it, if perchance
Thou crown the cup or join the dance,
Neither in anger nor in sport;
For Pleasure then would pass me by,
The Graces look ungraciously,
Love frown, and drive me from his court.

Brooke. Considering the chances and changes of humanity, I wish I were as certain that Pleasure will never pass you by, as I am that the Graces will never look on you ungraciously.

Sidney. So little am I ashamed of the hours I spend in poetry, even a consciousness that the poetry itself is bad never leads me to think the occupation is. Foliage, herbage, pebbles, may put in motion the finer parts of the mind; and although the first things it throws off be verses, and indifferent ones, we are not to despise the cultivator of them, but to consider him as possessing the garden of innocence, at which the great body of mankind looks only through the gate.

In the corner formed by the court-wall, sheltered and sunny, I found, earlier in the season than usual, a little rose-bud; which perhaps owed its existence to my cutting the plant in summer, when it began to intrude on the path, and had wetted the legs of the ladies with the rain it held. None but trifling poetry could be made out of this, yet other than trifling pleasure was.

Brooke. Philip, I can give you only spoiled flowers for unspoiled and unopened ones: will you accept them?

Sidney. Gladly.

Brooke. On what occasion and for whom my verses were composed, you may at once discover. Deem it enough for me to premise in elucidation, that women have no favor nor

mercy for the silence their charms impose on us. Little are the aware of the devotion we are offering to them in that stat whereinto the true lover is ever prone to fall, and which appear to them inattention, indifference, or moroseness. We must chirp before them eternally, or they will not moisten our beaks in our cages. They like praise best, we thanksgiving.

Sidney. Unfold the paper. What are you smiling at?

Brooke. The names of the speakers. I call one "*Poet*," the other "*Lady*." How questionably the former! how truly the latter! But judge.

Poet. Thus do you sit and break the flow'rs
That might have lived a few short hours,
And lived for you! Love, who o'erpowers
My youth and me,
Shows me the petals idly shed,
Shows me my hopes as early dead,
In vain, in vain admonished
By all I see.

Lady. And thus you while the noon away,
Watching me strip my flowers of gay
Apparel, just put on for May,
And soon laid by!
Cannot you teach me one or two
Fine phrases? If you can, pray do,
Since *you* are grown too wise to woo,
To listen I.

Poet. Lady, I come not here to teach,
But learn, the moods of gentle speech;
Alas! too far beyond my reach
Are happier strains.
Many frail leaves shall yet lie pull'd,
Many frail hopes in death-bed lull'd,
Or ere this outcast heart be school'd
By all its pains.

Sidney. Let me hope that here is only

A volant shadow, just enough to break
The sleeping sunbeam of soft idleness.

Brooke. When a woman hath ceased to be quite the same to us, it matters little how different she becomes.

Sidney. Hush! I will hear from you no sentiment but your own, and this can never be yours. Variations there are of

temperature in the finest season; and the truest heart has not always the same pulsations. If we had nothing to pardon or to be pardoned, we might appear to be more perfect than we are, but we should in fact be less so. Self-love is ungenerous and unforgiving; love grieves and forgives. Whatever there may be lying hid under those leaves and blossoms shall rest there until our evening walk; we having always chosen the calmest hours of the most beautiful days for our discourses on love and religion. Something of emotion, I cannot doubt, arose in your breast as you were writing these simple lines; yet I am certain it was sweet and solacing. Imagination should always be the confidant, for she is always the calmer, of Passion, where Wisdom and Virtue have an equally free admittance.

Let us now dismiss until evening comes (which is much the best time for them) all these disquisitions, and let us talk about absent friends.

Brooke. We must sit up late, if I am to tell you of all yours.

Sidney. While the weather is so temperate and genial, and while I can be out-of-doors, I care not how late I tarry among

> Night airs that make tree-shadows walk, and sheep
> Washed white in the cold moonshine on gray cliffs.

Our last excess of this nature was nearer the sea, where, when our conversation paused awhile in the stillness of mid-night we heard the distant waves break heavily. Their sound, you remarked, was such as you could imagine the sound of a giant might be, who, coming back from travel unto some smooth and level and still and solitary place, with all his armor and all his spoils about him, casts himself slumberously down to rest.

[First ed. ends at "union." There are, however, appended in small type the following paragraphs. "This conversation was longer. As the speakers were passionately fond of poetry, more was introduced: among the sections cancelled was the following, in which perhaps the verses may, to some readers, not be unacceptable. '*Brooke.* To happiness then and unhappiness, since we can discourse upon it without emotion: but first I would rather hear a few more verses; for a small draught increases the thirst of the very thirsty. *Sidney.* To write as the ancients . fiction. *Sidney.* How many who have abandoned . . . to give it.'"

The 2nd ed. ends at "to give it." There is the following note to the "Invocation to Sleep" in the 2nd ed. "The speakers were passionately fond of poetry, and more was introduced; but as this was altogether in imitation of their manner, which pleases few and ill accords with the character of the prose, it has been omitted." At the end of the Conversation in the 2nd ed. this paragraph occurs. "The following lines were once intended for the preceding dialogue, and they appear to a critical friend of mine so adapted to the time and the persons, that upon his judgment I subjoin them." Then follows the song to spring, the first three lines of which read in the earlier form—

Again thou comest, breezy March!
Again beneath heaven's brighter arch
The birds that shunned our winters, fly.

In the third verse and the third line the 2nd ed. reads "wait" for "urge." All lovers of Landor will be grateful that these songs have been preserved. It is curious to note Landor's reason for their omission is that they were "in imitation of their manner."]

II. SOUTHEY AND PORSON.[1]

Porson. I suspect, Mr Southey, you are angry with me for the freedom with which I have spoken of your poetry and Wordsworth's.

[1 This and the following Conversation are entirely imaginary. Porson died in 1808; and Laodamia was not written until 1814. Landor seems to have been aware that he was running some risk of falling into an anachronism; for on page 201 he makes Southey speak of Laodamia as an unpublished poem. I have failed to discover among Porson's works any attack upon Matthias or on his index. Porson was well assured that "The Pursuits of Literature" was written by Matthias, and for that reason "used always to call him the Pursuer of Literature" (Rogers' Table-talk. Porsoniana, 320). There are some uncomplimentary references to Porson in that "dull poem" and its "piquant" notes (Rogers' Table-talk, 134), and one patronizing allusion to Southey and his epic, "Joan of Arc,"—an epic written in six weeks. Wordsworth is not noticed The "little man" mentioned in the Conversation is Gifford, the editor of the *Quarterly Review*, to which Matthias was a contributor. The two men seem to have run together in Landor's mind. In "Last Fruit," p. 372, there is an epigram on them

Matthias, Gifford, men like those
Find in great poets but great foes,
In Wordsworth but a husky wheeze,
In Byron but a foul disease,

Southey. What could have induced you to imagine it, Mr Professor? You have indeed bent your eyes upon me, since we have been together, with somewhat of fierceness and defiance: I presume you fancied me to be a commentator.[2] You wrong me, in your belief that any opinion on my poetical works hath molested me; but you afford me more than compensation in supposing me acutely sensible of injustice done to Wordsworth. If we must converse on these topics, we will converse on him. What man ever existed who spent a more inoffensive[3] life, or adorned it with nobler studies?

Porson. None; and they who attack him with virulence are men of as little morality as reflection. I have demonstrated that one of them, he who wrote the *Pursuits of Literature*, could not construe a Greek sentence or scan a verse; and I have fallen on the very *Index* from which he drew out his forlorn hope on the parade. This is incomparably the most impudent fellow I have met with in the course of my reading, which has lain, you know, in a province where impudence is no rarity.[4] I am sorry to say that we critics who write for the learned have sometimes set a bad example to our younger brothers, the critics who write for the public: but if they were considerate and prudent, they would find out that a deficiency in weight and authority might in some measure be compensated by deference and decorum. Not to mention the refuse of the literary world, the sweeping of booksellers' shops, the dust thrown up by them in a corner to blow by pinches on new publications; not to tread upon or disturb this

> In Southey one who softly bleats,
> And one of thinnest air in Keats.
> Yet will these live for years and years
> When those have felt the fatal shears.

(*London Magazine*, July, 1823. Imag. Convers., i., 1824. i., 1826. Works, i., 1846. Works, iii., 1876)].

[2 First ed. reads: "commentator; and I am not irritated at a mistake. You," &c.]

[3 First ed. reads: "inoffensive, a more virtuous life," &c. One line below, 1st ed. reads: "*Porson.* I believe so; I have always heard it; and those who attack him with virulence or with levity are men of no morality and no reflection," &c.]

[4 First ed. reads: "rarity. He has little more merit in having stolen, than he would have had if he had never stolen at all" (see p. 192). From "I am" to "celebration" (187 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

filth, the greatest of our critics now living are only great[5] comparatively. They betray their inconsiderateness when they look disdainfully on the humbler in acquirements and intellect. A little wit, or, as that is not always at hand, a little impudence instead of it, throws its rampant brier over dry lacunes; a drop of oil, sweet or rancid, covers a great quantity of poor broth. Instead of any thing in this way, I would seriously recommend to the employer of our critics, young and old, that he oblige them to pursue a course of study such as this: that under the superintendence of some respectable student from the university, they first read and examine the contents of the book,—a thing greatly more useful in criticism than is generally thought; secondly, that they carefully write them down, number them, and range them under their several heads; thirdly, that they mark every beautiful, every faulty, every ambiguous, every uncommon expression. Which being completed, that they inquire what author, ancient or modern, has treated the same subject; that they compare them, first in smaller, afterward in larger portions, noting every defect in precision and its causes, every excellence and its nature; that they graduate these, fixing *plus* and *minus*, and designating them more accurately and discriminately by means of colors, stronger or paler. For instance, purple might express grandeur and majesty of thought: scarlet, vigor of expression; pink, liveliness; green, elegant and equable composition: these however and others, as might best attract their notice and serve their memory. The same process may be used where authors have not written on the same subject, when those who have are wanting, or have touched it but incidentally. Thus Addison and Fontenelle, not very like, may be compared in the graces of style, in the number and degree of just thoughts and lively fancies; thus the dialogues of Cicero with those of Plato, his ethics with those of Aristoteles, his orations with those of Demosthenes. It matters not if one be found superior to the other in this thing, and inferior in that: the exercise is taken; the qualities of two authors are explored and

[5 Second ed. reads: "great men comparatively; which they betray when they look disdainfully on the humbler in judgment and intellect: for if these were not humbler, what would they themselves be? A little," &c. Three lines below, 2nd ed. reads: "lacunes: a little grease covers," &c.]

understood, and their distances laid down, as geographers speak, from accurate survey. The *plus* and *minus* of good and bad and ordinary will have something of a scale to rest upon; and after a time the degrees of the higher parts in intellectual dynamics may be more nearly attained, though never quite exactly.

Southey. Nothing is easier than to mark and number the striking parts of Homer: it is a little more difficult to demonstrate why they are so. The same thing may then be done in Milton: these pieces in each poet may afterward be collated and summed up. Every man will be capable or incapable of it in proportion as his mind is poetical; few, indeed, will ever write anything on the subject worth reading: but they will acquire strength and practice. The critic of the trade will gain a more certain livelihood and a more reputable one than before, and no great matter will be spent upon his education.

Porson. Which, however, must be entered on in an opposite way from the statuary's: the latter begins with dirt and ends with marble; the former begins with marble and ends with dirt. This, nevertheless, he may so manage as neither to be ridiculed nor starved.

Southey. For my own part, I should be well contented with that share of reputation which might come meted out and delivered to me after the analytical and close comparison you propose. Its accomplishment can hardly be expected in an age when every thing must be done quickly. To run with oars and sails was formerly the expression of orators for velocity: it would now express slowness. Our hats, our shoes, our whole habiliments, are made at one stroke: our fortunes the same, and the same our criticisms. Under my fellow-laborers in this vineyard, many vines have bled and few have blossomed. The proprietors seem to keep their stock as agriculturists keep lean sheep, to profit by their hoof and ordure.

Porson. You were speaking this moment of the changes among us. Dwarfs are in fashion still; but they are the dwarfs of literature. These little zanies are invited to the assemblies of the gay world, and admitted to the dinners of the political. Limbs of the law, paralyzed and laid up professionally, enter into association with printers, and take retaining fees from some authors to harangue against others out of any brief before them.

Southey. And they meet with encouragement and success! We stigmatise any lie but a malignant one, and we repel any attack but against fame, virtue, and genius. Fond of trying experiments on poison, we find that the strongest may be extracted from blood; and this itself is rejected as unworthy of our laboratory, unless it be drawn from a generous and a capacious heart.

Porson. No other country hath ever been so abundant in speculation as ours; but it would be incredible, if we did not see it, that ten or fifteen men, of the humblest attainments, gain a comfortable livelihood by periodical attacks on its best writers. Adverse as I have declared myself to the style and manner of Wordsworth, I never thought that all his reviewers put together could compose any thing equal to the worst paragraph in his volumes. I have spoken vehemently against him, and mildly against them; because he could do better, they never could.[6] The same people would treat me with as little reverence as they treat him with, if any thing I write were popular, or would become so. It is by fixing on such works that they are carried with them into the doorway. The porter of Cleopatra would not have admitted the asps if they had not been under the figs. Show me, if you can, Mr Southey, a temperate, accurate, solid exposition of any English work whatever, in any English review.

Southey. Not having at hand so many numbers as it would be requisite to turn over, I must decline the challenge.

Porson. I have observed the same man extol in private the very book on whose ruin he dined the day before.

Southey. His judgment, then, may be ambiguous, but you must not deny him the merit of gratitude. If you blame the poor and vicious for abusing the solaces of poverty and vice, how much more should you censure those who administer to them the means of such indulgence.

Porson. The publications which excite the most bustle and biting from these fellows are always the best, as the fruit on which the flies gather is the ripest. Periodical critics were never so plentiful as they now are. There is hardly a young author

[6 Second ed. reads: "could. If he thinks me his enemy, it is through modesty, if they think me their friend, it is through impudence. The same," &c.]

who does not make his first attempt in some review; showing his teeth, hanging by his tail, pleased and pleasing by the volubility of his chatter, and doing his best to get a penny for his exhibitor and a nut for his own pouch, by the facetiousness of the tricks he performs upon our heads and shoulders. From all I can recollect of what I noticed when I turned over such matters, a well-sized and useful volume might be compiled and published annually, containing the incorrect expressions, and omitting the opinions, of our booksellers' boys, the reviewers. Looking the other day by accident at two pages of *judgments*, recommendatory of new publications, I found, face to face, the following words, from not the worst of the species: *Scattering so considerable a degree of interest over the contemplation, &c. . . . The dazzling glitter of intellect*,[7] *&c.* Now, in what manner can we *scatter a degree*, unless it be one of those degrees which are scattered at Edinburgh and Glasgow? Such an expression as *dazzling glitter* may often be applied to fancy, but never to intellect. These gentlemen might do somewhat better if they would read us for the sake of improvement, and not for the sake of showing off a somewhat light familiarity which never can appertain to them. The time however, I am inclined to believe, is not far distant, when the fashionable will be as much ashamed of purchasing such wayside publications as the learned would be of reading them. Come, let us away from these criers of cat's-meat and dog's-meat, who excite so many yelpings and mewings as they pass: the vicinity is none of the sweetest.

You will do me the favor, Mr Southey, not to mention to those who may be kept under the regimen what I have been proposing here for the benefit of literature; since, although in the street and at college I have had quarrels lighter or graver with most other conditions, I have avoided both conflict and contact with writers for reviews and almanacks. Once indeed, I confess it, I was very near falling as low: words passed between me and the more favored man of letters, who announces to the world the *Works and Days* of Newmarket,—the competitors at its games, their horses, their equisons and colors, and the attendant votaries of that goddess who readily leaves Paphos or Amathus for this annual celebration.

[7 See note at end.]

Those who have failed as painters turn picture-cleaners; those who have failed as writers turn reviewers. Orator Henley taught in the last century that the readiest-made shoes are boots cut down: there are those who abundantly teach us now that the readiest-made critics are cut-down poets. Their assurance is, however, by no means diminished from their ill success.

Southey.[8] Puffy fingers have pelted me long enough with snow-balls, and I should not wonder if some of them reached the skirts of my great-coat; but I never turned round to look.

Porson. The little man who followed you in the *Critical Review*, and whose pretensions widen every smile his imbecility excited, would, I am persuaded, if Homer were living, pat him in a fatherly way upon the cheek, and tell him that, by moderating his fire and contracting his prolixity, the public might ere long expect something from him worth reading.

I had visited a friend in *King's Road* when he entered.

"Have you seen the *Review?*" cried he. "Worse than ever! I am resolved to insert a paragraph in the papers, declaring that I had no concern in the last number."

"Is it so very bad?" said I quietly.

"Infamous! Detestable!" exclaimed he.

"Sit down then: nobody will believe you," was my answer.

Since that morning he has discovered that I drink harder than usual, that my faculties are wearing fast away, that once indeed I had some Greek in my head, but—he then claps the forefinger to the side of his nose, turns his eye slowly upward, and looks compassionately and calmly.

Southey. Come, Mr. Porson, grant him his merits: no critic is better contrived to make any work a monthly[9] one, no writer more dexterous in giving a finishing touch.

Porson. Let him take his due and be gone: now to the rest. The plagiary has a greater latitude of choice than we; and if he brings home a parsnip or turnip-top, when he could as easily have pocketed a nectarine or a pine-apple, he must be a blockhead. I

[8 From "*Southey*" to "look" (3 lines) added in 3rd ed. One line below, 1st ed. reads: "*Review*, poor Robin Fellowes, whose," &c.]

[9 First ed. reads: "work a very periodical one," &c. Three lines below, from "Let" to "rest" (1 line) added in 2nd ed.]

never heard the name of the[10] *Pursuer of Literature*, who has little more merit in having stolen than he would have had if he had never stolen at all; and I have forgotten that other man's, who evinced his fitness to be the censor of our age, by a translation of the most naked and impure satires of antiquity,—those of Juvenal, which owe their preservation to the partiality of the Friars. I shall entertain an unfavorable opinion of him if he has translated them well: pray, has he?

Southey. Indeed, I do not know. I read poets for their poetry, and to extract that nutriment of the intellect and of the heart which poetry should contain. I never listen to the swans of the cesspool, and must declare that nothing is heavier to me than rottenness and corruption.

Porson. You are right, sir, perfectly right. A translator of Juvenal would open a public drain to look for a needle, and may miss it. My nose is not easily offended; but I must have something to fill my belly. Come, we will lay aside the scrip of the transpositor and the pouch of the pursuer, in reserve for the days of unleavened bread; and again, if you please, to the lakes and mountains. Now we are both in better humor, I must bring you to a confession that in your friend Wordsworth there is occasionally a little trash.

Southey. A haunch of venison would be trash to a Brahmin, a bottle of Burgundy to the xerif of Mecca.

Porson.[11] I will not be anticipated by you. Trash, I confess, is no proof that nothing good can lie above it and about it. The roughest and least manageable soil surrounds gold and diamonds. Homer and Dante and Shakspeare and Milton have each many hundred lines worth little; lines without force, without feeling, without fancy; in short, without beauty of any kind. But it is the character of modern poetry, as it is of modern arms

[10 First ed. reads: "of that pursuer of literature, and I have forgotten," &c. (see note on p. 185). Four lines below, 1st ed. reads: "friars; but indeed they are so impregnated and encrusted with bay salt and alum that they would not burn. I shall," &c.]

[11 From "*Porson*" to "rudeness" (11 lines) added in 2nd ed. Second ed. reads: "rudeness. Among the ancients are included the names abovementioned, and all those poets who are fairly out of the school now open; just as we call a family not only the master, the mistress, and the children, but likewise the servants and the retinue. *Southey*," &c.]

and equipments, to be more uniformly trim and polished. The ancients in both had more strength and splendor; they had also more inequality and rudeness.

Southey. We are guided by precept, by habit, by taste, by constitution. Hitherto our sentiments on poetry have been delivered down to us from authority; and if it can be demonstrated, as I think it may be, that the authority is inadequate, and that the dictates are often inapplicable and often misinterpreted, you will allow me to remove the cause out of court. Every man can see what is very bad in a poem; almost every one can see what is very good: but you, Mr Porson, who have turned over all the volumes of all the commentators, will inform me whether I am right or wrong in asserting that no critic hath yet appeared, who hath been able to fix or to discern the exact degrees of excellence above a certain point.

Porson. None.

Southey. The reason is because the eyes of no one hath been upon a level with it. Supposing, for the sake of argument, the contest of Hesiod and Homer to have taken place: the judges who decided in favor of the worse, and he indeed in the poetry has little merit, may have been elegant, wise, and conscientious men. Their decision was in favor of that to the species of which they had been the most accustomed. Corinna was preferred to Pindar no fewer than five times, and the best judges in Greece gave her the preference; yet whatever were her powers, and beyond a question they were extraordinary, we may assure ourselves that she stood many degrees below Pindar. Nothing is more absurd than the report that the judges were prepossessed by her beauty. Plutarch tells us that she was much older than her competitor, who consulted her judgment in his earlier odes. Now, granting their first competition to have been when Pindar was twenty years old, and that the others were in the years succeeding, her beauty must have been somewhat on the decline; for in Greece there are few women who retain the graces, none who retain the bloom of youth, beyond the twenty-third year. Her countenance, I doubt not, was expressive: but expression, although it gives beauty to men, makes women pay dearly for its stamp, and pay soon. Nature seems, in protection to their loveliness, to have ordered that they who are our superiors in quickness

and sensibility should be little disposed to laborious thought, or to long excursions in the labyrinths of fancy. We may be convinced that the verdict of the judges was biassed by nothing else than their habitudes of thinking; we may be convinced, too, that living in an age when poetry was cultivated highly, and selected from the most acute and the most dispassionate, they were subject to no greater errors of opinion than are the learned messmates of our English colleges.

Porson. You are more liberal in your largesses to the fair Greeks than a friend of mine was, who resided in Athens to acquire the language. He assured me that beauty there was in bud at thirteen, in full blossom at fifteen, losing a leaf or two every day at seventeen, trembling on the thorn at nineteen, and under the tree at twenty.

Returning,[12] Mr Southey, to the difficulty, or rather to the rarity, of an accurate and just survey of poetical and other literary works, I do not see why we should not borrow an idea from geometricians and astronomers; why we should not have our triangles and quadrants; why, in short, we should not measure our writings by small portions at a time, and compare the brighter parts of two authors page by page. The minor beauties, the complexion and contexture, may be considered at last and more at large. Daring geniuses, ensigns, and undergraduates, members of Anacreontic and Pindaric Clubs, will scoff at me. Painters who can draw nothing correctly hold Raphael in contempt, and appeal to the sublimity of Michel Angelo and the splendor of Titian; ignorant that these great men were great by science first, and employed in painting the means I propose for criticism. Venus and the damned submitted to the same squaring.

Such a method would be useful to critics in general, and even the wisest and most impartial would be much improved by it; although few, either by these means or any, are likely to be correct or quite unanimous on the merits of any two authors whatsoever.

Southey. Those who are learners would be teachers; while those who have learned much would procure them at any price. It is only when we have mounted high, that we are sensible of wanting a hand.

[12 From "Returning" to "genius" (76 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

Porson. On the subject of poetry in particular, there are some questions not yet sufficiently discussed: I will propose two. First, admitting that in the tragedies of Sophocles there was (which I believe) twice as much of good poetry as in the Iliad, does it follow that he was as admirable a poet as Homer?

Southey. No, indeed: so much I do attribute to the conception and formation of a novel and vast design, and so wide is the difference I see between the completion of one very great and the perfection of many smaller. Would even these have existed without Homer? I think not.

Porson. My next question is, whether a poet is to be judged from the quantity of his bad poetry, or from the quality of his best?

Southey. I should certainly say from the latter; because it must be in poetry as in sculpture and painting: he who arrives at a high degree of excellence in these arts will have made more models, more sketches and designs, than he who has reached but a lower; and the conservation of them, whether by accident or by choice, can injure and affect in no manner his more perfect and elaborate works. A drop of sealing-wax, falling by chance or negligence, may efface a fine impression; but what is well done in poetry is never to be effaced by what is ill done afterward. Even the bad poetry of a good poet hath something in it which renders it more valuable, to a judge of these matters, than what passes for much better, and what in many essential points is truly so. I will however keep to the argument, not having lost sight of my illustration in alluding to designs and sketches. Many men would leave themselves penniless to purchase an early and rude drawing by Raphael; some arabesque, some nose upon a gryphon or gryphon upon a nose; and never would inquire whether the painter had kept it in his portfolio or had cast it away. The same persons, and others whom we call much wiser, exclaim loudly against any literary sketch unworthy of a leaf among the productions of its author. No ideas are so trivial, so incorrect, so incoherent, but they may have entered the idle fancy, and have taken a higher place than they ought in the warm imagination of the best poets. We find in Dante, as you just now remarked, a prodigious quantity of them; and indeed not a few in Virgil, grave as he is and stately. Infantine and petty there is hardly

any thing in the *Iliad*, but the dull and drowsy stop us unexpectedly now and then. The boundaries of mind lie beyond these writers, although their splendor lets us see nothing on the farther side. In so wide and untrodden a creation as that of Shakspeare's, can we wonder or complain that sometimes we are bewildered and entangled in the exuberance of fertility? Dry-brained men upon the Continent, the trifling wits of the theatre, accurate however and expert calculators, tell us that his beauties are balanced by his faults. The poetical opposition, puffing for popularity, cry cheerily against them, *His faults are balanced by his beauties;* when, in reality, all the faults that ever were committed in poetry would be but as air to earth, if we could weigh them against one single thought or image, such as almost every scene exhibits in every drama of this unrivalled genius. Do[13] you hear me with patience?

Porson. With more; although at Cambridge we rather discourse on Bacon, for we know him better. He was immeasurably a less wise man than Shakspeare, and not a wiser writer; for he knew his fellow-man only as he saw him in the street and in the court, which indeed is but a dirtier street and a narrower: Shakspeare, who also knew him there, knew him everywhere else, both as he was and as he might be.

Southey. There is as great a difference between Shakspeare and Bacon as between an American forest and a London timber-yard. In the timber-yard, the materials are sawed and squared and set across: in the forest, we have the natural form of the tree, all its growth, all its branches, all its leaves, all the mosses that grow about it, all the birds and insects that inhabit it; now deep shadows absorbing the whole wilderness; now bright bursting glades, with exuberant grass and flowers and fruitage; now untroubled skies; now terrific thunderstorms; everywhere multiformity, everywhere immensity.

Porson.[14] If after this ramble in the heat you are not thirsty, I would ask another question. What is the reason why, when not only the glory of great kings and statesmen, but even of great philosophers, is much enhanced by two or three good

[13 From "Do" to "immensity" (19 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[14 Second ed. reads: "*Porson.* A third question . . What," &c. From "immensity" to "severely" (22 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

apothegms, that of a great poet is lowered by them, even if he should invest them with good verse? For certainly the dignity of a great poet is thought to be lowered by the writing of epigrams.

Southey. As[15] you said of Wordsworth, the great poet could accomplish better things; the others could not. People in this apparent act of injustice do real justice, without intending or knowing it. All writers have afforded some information, or have excited some sentiment or idea, somewhere. This alone should exempt the humblest of them from revilings, unless it appear that he hath misapplied his powers through insolence or malice. In that case, whatever sentence may be passed upon him, I consider it no honor to be the executioner. What must we think of those who travel far and wide that, before they go to rest, they may burst into the arbor of a recluse, whose weakest thoughts are benevolence, whose worst are purity? On his poetry I shall say nothing; unless you lead me to it, wishing you however to examine it analytically and severely.

Porson. There[16] are folks who, when they read my criticism, say, "I do not think so." It is because they do not think so, that I write. Men entertain some opinions which it is indeed our duty to confirm, but many also which it is expedient to eradicate, and more which it is important to correct. They read less willingly what may improve their understanding and enlarge their capacity, than what corroborates their prejudices and establishes their prepossessions. I never bear malice toward those who try to reduce me to their own dimensions. A narrow mind cannot be enlarged, nor can a capacious one be contracted. Are we angry with a phial for not being a flask? Or do we wonder that the skin of an elephant sits unwieldily on a squirrel?

Southey. Great men will always pay deference to greater: little men will not; because the little are fractious, and the weaker they are, the more obstinate and crooked.

Porson. To proceed on our inquiry. I will not deny that

[15 From "As" to "Wordsworth" added in 3rd ed. Three lines below, 2nd ed. reads: "justice, and confer high honour where it is due, without," &c.]

[16 From "There" to "inquiry" (17 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

to compositions of a new kind, like Wordsworth's, we come without scales and weights, and without the means of making an assay.

Southey. Mr Porson, it does not appear to me that any thing more is necessary, in the first instance, than to interrogate our hearts in what manner they have been affected. If the ear is satisfied; if at one moment a tumult is aroused in the breast, and tranquillized at another, with a perfect consciousness of equal power exerted in both cases; if we rise up from the perusal of the work with a strong excitement to thought, to imagination, to sensibility; above all, if we sat down with some propensities toward evil, and walk away with much stronger toward good, in the midst of a world which we never had entered and of which we never had dreamed before,—shall we perversely put on again the *old man* of criticism, and dissemble that we have been conducted by a most beneficent and most potent genius? Nothing proves to me so manifestly in what a pestiferous condition are its lazarettos, as when I observe how little hath been objected against those who have substituted words for things, and how much against those who have reinstated things for words.

Porson.[17] I find, however, much to censure in our modern poets: I mean those who have written since Milton. But praise is due to such as threw aside the French models. Percy was the first; then came the Wartons, and then Cowper,—more diversified in his poetry and more classical than any since.

Southey. I wonder you admire an author so near your own times, indeed contemporary.

Porson. There is reason for wonder. Men in general do so in regard both to liberty and poetry.

Southey. I know not whether the Gauls had this latter gift before they assaulted the temple of Apollo at Delphi; certainly from that time downward the god hath owed them a grudge, and hath been as unrelenting as he was with the dogs and mules before Troy. The succeeding race, nevertheless, has tightened and gilded and gallantly tagged the drum of tragic declamation. Surely not Cowper nor any other is farther from it than Wordsworth.

[17 From "*Porson*" to "*Southey*" (21 lines) added in 3rd ed]

Porson. But his drum is damp; and his tags are none the better for being of hemp, with the broken stalks in.

Southey. Let Wordsworth prove to the world that there may be animation without blood and broken bones, and tenderness remote from the stews. Some will doubt it; for even things the most evident are often but little perceived and strangely estimated. Swift ridiculed the music of Handel and the generalship of Marlborough; Pope[18] the perspicacity and the scholarship of Bentley; Gray the abilities of Shaftesbury and the eloquence of Rousseau. Shakspeare hardly found those who would collect his tragedies; Milton was read from godliness; Virgil was antiquated and rustic; Cicero, Asiatic. What a rabble has persecuted my friend! An elephant is born to be consumed by ants in the midst of his unapproachable solitudes: Wordsworth is the prey of Jeffrey. Why repine? Let us rather amuse ourselves with allegories, and recollect that God in the creation left his noblest creature at the mercy of a serpent.

Porson. In[19] our authors of the present day I would recommend principally to reduce the expenditure of words to the means of support, and to be severe in style without the appearance of severity. But this advice is more easily given than taken. Your friend is verbose; not indeed without something for his words to rest upon, but from a resolution to gratify and indulge his capacity. He pursues his thoughts too far; and considers more how he may show them entirely than how he may show them advantageously. Good men may utter whatever comes uppermost: good poets may not. It is better, but it is also more difficult, to make a selection of thoughts than to accumulate them. He who has a splendid sideboard should have an iron chest with a double lock upon it, and should hold in reserve a greater part than he displays.

I[20] know not why two poets so utterly dissimilar as your author and Coleridge should be constantly mentioned together. In the one I find diffuseness, monotony, not indistinctness, but uninterest-

[18] First ed. reads: "Pope the style of Middleton and the scholarship," &c. Five lines below, 1st ed. reads: "friend, in these latter times the glory of our country. An," &c.]

[19] First ed. reads: "In my opinion your friend is verbose;" &c.]

[20] From "I" to "me" (21 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

ing expanse, and such figures and such coloring as Morland's; in the other, bright colors without form, sublimely void. In his prose he talks like a madman, when he calls Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians "the sublimest composition of man." [21]

Southey. This indeed he hath spoken, but he has not yet published it in his writings: it will appear in his *Table Talk*, perhaps.

Porson. Such table-talk may be expected to come forth very late in the evening, when the wine and candles are out, and the body lies horizontally underneath. He believes he is a believer; but why does he believe that the Scriptures are best reverenced by bearing false witness to them? Is it an act of piety to play the little child in the *go-cart* of Religion, or to beslaver the pretty dress he has just put on?

> Porrigens teneras manus
> Matris e gremio suæ
> Semihiante labello.

Pardon a quotation: I hate it! I wonder how it escaped me.

Wordsworth goes out of his way to be attacked; he picks up a piece of dirt, throws it on the carpet in the midst of the company, and cries, *This is a better man than any of you!* He does indeed mould the base material into what form he chooses; but why not rather invite us to contemplate it than challenge us to condemn it? Here surely is false taste.

Southey. The principle and the most general accusation against him is, that the vehicle of his thoughts is unequal to them. Now did ever the judges at the Olympic games say, "We would have awarded to you the meed of victory, if your chariot had been equal to your horses: it is true they have won; but the people are displeased at a car neither new nor richly gilt, and without a gryphon or sphinx engraved on the axle"? You admire simplicity in Euripides; you censure it in Wordsworth: believe me, sir, it arises in neither from penury of thought—which seldom has produced it—but from the strength of temperance, and at the suggestion of principle Some[22] of his critics are sincere in their censure, and are neither invidious nor unlearned;

[21 "The divinest composition of man" *Table Talk*, S. T. Coleridge, May 25, 1850.]

[22 From "Some" to "indiscriminately" (11 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

but their optics have been exercised on other objects altogether dissimilar, and they are (permit me an expression not the worse for daily use) entirely out of their element. His very clearness puzzles and perplexes them, and they imagine that straightness is distortion,—as children on seeing a wand dipped in limpid and still water. Clear[23] writers, like clear fountains, do not seem so deep as they are: the turbid look the most profound.

Porson. Fleas know not whether they are upon the body of a giant or upon one of ordinary size, and bite both indiscriminately.

Southey. Our critics are onion-eaters by the Pyramids of Poetry. They sprawl along the sands, without an idea how high and wonderful are the edifices above, whose bases are solid as the earth itself, and whose summits are visible over a hundred ages.

Ignorance[24] has not been single-handed the enemy of Wordsworth; but Petulance and Malignity have accompanied her, and have been unremittant in their attacks. Small poets, small critics, lawyers who have much time on their hands and hanging heavily, come forward unfeed against him; such is the spirit of patriotism, rushing everywhere for the public good. Most of these have tried their fortune at some little lottery-office of literature, and, receiving a blank, have chewed upon it harshly and wryly. We, like jackdaws, are amicable creatures while we are together in the dust; but let any gain a battlement or steeple, and behold! the rest fly about him at once, and beat him down.

Take up a poem of Wordsworth's and read it,—I would rather say, read them all; and, knowing that a mind like yours must grasp closely what comes within it, I will then appeal to you whether any poet of our country, since[25] Milton, hath exerted greater powers with less of strain and less of ostentation. I would however, by his permission, lay before you for this purpose a poem which is yet unpublished and incomplete.

Porson. Pity, with such abilities, he does not imitate the ancients somewhat more.

[23] In the 2nd ed., from "clear" to "profound" (2 lines) follows on "indiscriminately," and forms part of Porson's speech. From "Our" to "ages" (5 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[24] From "ignorance" to "down" (12 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

[25] First ed. reads: "since Shakspeare, hath," &c.]

Southey. Whom did they imitate? If his genius is equal to theirs he has no need of a guide. He also will be an ancient; and the very counterparts of those who now decry him will extol him a thousand years hence in malignity to the moderns. The[26] ancients have always been opposed to them; just as, at routs and dances, elderly beauties to younger. It would be wise to contract the scene of action, and to decide the business in both cases by couples.

Why do you repeat the word *rout* so often?

Porson. Not because the expression is novel and barbarous, I do assure you; nor because the thing itself is equally the bane of domestic, of convivial, and of polite society. I was once at one by mistake, and really I saw there what you describe; and this made me (as you tell me I did, though I was not aware of it) repeat the word, and smile. You seem curious.

Southey. Rather, indeed.

Porson. I had been dining out: there were some who smoked after dinner; within a few hours the fumes of their pipes produced such an effect on my head, that I was willing to go into the air a little. Still I continued hot and thirsty; and an undergraduate, whose tutor was my old acquaintance, proposed that we should turn into an oyster-cellar, and refresh ourselves with oysters and porter. The rogue, instead of this, conducted me to a fashionable house[27] in the neighborhood of St James's; and although I expostulated with him, and insisted that we were going upstairs and not down, he appeared to me so ingenuous and so sincere in his protestations to the contrary, that I could well disbelieve him no longer. Nevertheless, receiving on the stairs many shoves and elbowings, I could not help from telling him plainly that, if indeed it was the oyster-cellar in Fleet Street, the company was much altered for the worse, and that in future I should frequent another. When the fumes of the pipes had left

[26] From "The" to "inattention" (72 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

[27] "I once took him [Porson] to an evening party at William Spencer's, where he was introduced to several women of fashion, Lady Crewe, &c., who were very anxious to meet the great Grecian. How do you suppose he entertained them? Chiefly by reciting an immense quantity of old forgotten Vauxhall songs. He was far from sober and at last talked so oddly, that they all retired from him, except Lady Crewe, who boldly kept her ground," &c. Rogers' *Table Talk*, p. 218.]

me, I discovered the deceit by the brilliancy and indecency of the dresses, and was resolved not to fall into temptation. Although, to my great satisfaction and surprise, no immodest proposal was directly made to me, I looked about, anxious that no other man in company should know me beside those whose wantonness had conducted me thither; and I would have escaped if I could have found the door, from which every effort I made appeared to remove me farther and farther.

A pretty woman said loudly, "He has no gloves on!"

"What nails the creature has!" replied an elder one. "Pianoforte keys wanting the white!" I tried to conceal my hands as well as might be; when suddenly there was a titter from the middle-aged and young, and a grave look and much erectness from the rest. So serious and stern did they appear to me, I never saw the like but once; which was in a file of soldiers, ordered out to shoot a deserter at St Ives. I was the only person, young or old, male or female, that blushed; and I had not done so before for thirty years, to the best of my recollection. I now understood that blushing is a sign of half-breeding; and that an elevation of the eyebrow, and the opening of the lips a straw's breadth, are the most violent expressions of feeling permitted in such places. The gentlemen were neutral; unless the neutrality may be said to have been broken by two or three words, which I suspect to have been meant for English; a *token-coinage* fit only for the district. One, however, more polite and more attentive, bowed to me. I did not recollect his features, which he divined by mine, and said, "Sir, I once recovered your watch for you, and wish I could now as easily recover its neighbor, the button." I looked down, and perceived that the place of concealment, the refuge of my hand, had, like my conductor, been false to me. The gentleman was a thief-taker; three others of the fraternity had likewise been invited on suspicion that there were several pickpockets: I mean beside the legitimate, and supernumerary to those who had been seated by the lady of the house at the card-tables. The thief-takers were recognised by the company; the higher and more respectable spoke familiarly with them; persons of inferior rank saluted them more distantly and coldly; and there were some few who slunk obliquely from them as they passed, like landsmen walking on deck in a breeze.

This shyness was far from mutual; and the gentlemen who presided here as the good genii or tutelary deities of the place awakened with winks one another's smiles, and pardoned the inattention.

Southey.[28] Those are fortunate who lose nothing in such places, and more fortunate who acquire nothing. You yourself remain quite unchanged: not a tone of your voice, not an article of your dress—

Porson. If this appears strange to you, it will appear stranger that I was an object of imitation. What the thief-taker saw with apprehension, the young gentlemen have copied with sedulity, though they carry gloves. Their hands take that turn.

I[29] little thought that any of the company could have known me, or that my treacherous friend would have mentioned my name; and still less should I have prognosticated that I must, in an unguarded moment, set a fashion to the dandies, such as the dress of the ancients and the decency of the moderns had hitherto precluded.

I now come to your remark, confirmed to me by my own observation, upon the hostilities at such parties. A beldame with prominent eyes, painted mole-hairs, and abundantly rich in the extensive bleaching-ground of cheeks and shoulders—a German as I imagine—was speaking all manner of spiteful things against a young person called pretty; and after a long discussion, not only on her defects, but also on those of her family and parchments, *Who is she, I should like to know*, terminated the effusion. My betrayer had absconded, not without engaging another to find me and conduct me home. As we were passing through the folding-doors, I saw the baroness (for such he called her) with her arm upon the neck of the girl, and looking softly and benignly, and styling her *my young friend here* in such a sweet guttural accent, so long in drawing up, you would have thought it must have come from the heart at the very least. I mentioned my surprise.

"She was so strongly the fashion at the close of the evening," said my Mentor, "that it would never do (for the remainder of the night) not to know her; and, as proper time

[28] From "*Southey*" to "turn" (8 lines) added in 3rd ed.]
[29] From "I" to "daughters" (67 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

was wanting to get up a decent enmity, nothing was left for it but sworn friendship. To-morrow the baroness will call her my *protégée*, and the day after ask again, *Who is she*, unless she happens to hear that the girl has a person of high rank among her connections, which I understand she has; then the baroness will press her to the heart, or to that pound of flesh which lies next it."

Trifling people are often useful, unintentionally and unconsciously: illustrations may be made out of them even for scholars and sages. A hangman sells to a ragman the materials on which a Homer is printed. Would you imagine that in places like these it was likely for me to gain a new insight into language?

Southey. I should not, indeed. Children make us reflect on it occasionally, by an unusual and just expression; but in such society every thing is trite and trivial.

Porson. Yet so it was. A friend who happened to be there, although I did not see him, asked me afterward what I thought of the naked necks of the ladies.

"To tell you the truth," replied I, "the women of all countries, and the men in most, have usually kept their necks naked."

"You appear not to understand me, or you quibble," said he; "I mean their bosoms."

I then understood for the first time that *neck* signifies *bosom* when we speak of women, though not so when we speak of men or other creatures. But if *bosom* is *neck*, what according to the same scale of progression ought to be *bosom?* The usurped dominion of neck extends from the ear downward to where mermaids become fish. This conversation led me to reflect that I was born in the time when people had *thighs:* before your memory, I imagine. At present there is nothing but leg from the hip to the instep. My friend, Mr Small, of Peter-house, a very decent and regular man, and fond of fugitive pieces,[30] read before a lady and her family, from under the head of *descriptive*, some verses about the spring and the bees. Unluckily, the *honeyed thighs* of our little Euro-

[30 First ed. reads: "pieces, such as are collected or written by our Platts and Mavors and Valpys, read," &c.]

pean sugar-slaves caught the attention of the mother, who colored excessively at the words, and said with much gravity of reproof, "Indeed, Mr Small, I never could have thought it of you," and added, waving her hand with matronly dignity toward the remainder of the audience, "Sir, I have daughters." And[31] I know not what offence the Great Toe can have committed, that he never should be mentioned by the graver and more stately members of the family, or, if mentioned, be denounced with all his adherents; when many of these graver and statelier walk less humbly, and with much less heed against offending. In Italy, if any extremity of the human body is mentioned, it is preceded by the words, "*with respect;*" so that most respect is shown to the parts, as to the characters, that least deserve it.

Southey. Pray tell me what else appeared to you remarkable at the rout; for when a person of your age and with your powers of observation is present at one for the first time, many things must strike him which another sees without reflection.

Porson. I[32] saw among the rest two or three strangers of distinction, as I understood by their dresses and decorations; and, observing that nobody noticed them, except the lady of the house, who smiled and dropped a few syllables as she passed, I inquired the next day whether they were discreditable or suspicious. "On the contrary," said my informant, "they are of the highest character as well as of the highest rank, and, above all, of well-proved loyalty: but we Englishmen lose our facility of conversation in the presence of strangers; added to which, we consider it an indecorous thing to pay the least attention to persons to whom we never were introduced. Strangers act otherwise. Every man of education, and of a certain rank, does the honors, not of the house, but of society at large. In no company at Paris, or any other capital in the world, would a foreigner stand five minutes without receiving some[33] attention and courtesy.

[31] From "And" to "*Porson*" (15 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[32] From "I" to "that" (38 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

[33] Second ed. reads: "some mark of attention; a compliment, an enquiry, a congratulation, accompanied by a smile at least, or other act of exterior courtesy. Abroad," &c.]

Abroad all gentlemen are equal, from the *duc et pair* to the Gascon who dines on chestnuts; and all feel that they are. The Englishman of ancient but private name is indignant and sullen that his rights at home are denied him; and his wounded pride renders him unsocial and uncivil. Pride of another kind acts on our society in the same manner. I have seen Irish peers, issuing from the shop and the desk, push rudely and scornfully by the most ancient of the French nobility; the cadets of whose families founded the oldest of ours, and waved the sword of knighthood over our Plantagenets. For which reason, whenever I sit down at table[34] in any public place with an Irish or even an English peer of recent creation, I select the sturdiest of my servants to stand behind my chair, with orders to conduct him by the ears out of the room, should I lift up a finger to indicate the command."

I ought not to have interrupted you so long, in your attempt to prove Wordsworth, shall I say, the rival or the resembler of the ancients?

Southey. Such excursions are not unseasonable in such discussions, and lay in a store of good humor for them. Your narrative has amused me exceedingly. As you call upon me to return with you to the point we set out from, I hope I may assert without a charge of paradox, that whatever is good in poetry is common to all good poets, however wide may be the diversity of manner. Nothing can be more dissimilar than the three Greek tragedians: but would you prefer the closest and best copier of Homer to the worst (whichever he be) among them? Let us avoid what is indifferent or doubtful, and embrace what is good, whether we see it in another or not; and if we have contracted any peculiarity while our muscles and bones were softer, let us hope finally to outgrow it. Our feelings and modes of thinking forbid and exclude a very frequent imitation of the old classics, not to mention our manners, which have a nearer connection than is generally known to exist with the higher poetry. When the occasion permitted it, Wordsworth has not declined to treat a subject as an ancient poet of equal vigor would have treated it. Let me repeat to you his *Laodamia*.

Porson. After your animated recital of this classic poem, I

[34] Second ed. reads: "table, with an Irish peer of recent," &c.]

begin to think more highly of you both. It is pleasant to find two poets living as brothers, and particularly when the palm lies between them, with hardly a third in sight. Those who have ascended to the summit of the mountain sit quietly and familiarly side by side; it is only those who are climbing with[35] briers about their legs, that kick and scramble. Yours is a temper found less frequently in our country than in others. The French poets, indeed, must stick together to keep themselves warm. By employing courteous expressions mutually, they indulge their vanity rather than their benevolence, and bring the spirit of contest into action gayly and safely. Among the Romans we find Virgil, Horace, and several of their contemporaries intimately united and profuse of reciprocal praise. Ovid, Cicero, and Pliny are authors the least addicted to censure, and the most ready to offer their testimony in favor of abilities in Greek or countryman. These are the three Romans—the least amiable of nations, and (one excepted) the least sincere—with whom I should have liked best to spend an evening.

Southey. Ennius and old Cato, I am afraid, would have run away with your first affections.

Porson. Old Cato! He, like a wafer, must have been well wetted to be good for any thing. Such gentlemen as old Cato we meet every day in St Mary Axe, and wholesomer wine than his wherever there are sloes and turnips. Ennius could converse without ignorance about Scipio, and without jealousy about Homer.

Southey. And I think he would not have disdained to nod his head on reading *Laodamia.*

Porson. You have recited a most spirited thing, indeed;[36] and now to give you a proof that I have been attentive, I will remark two passages that offend me. In the first stanza,

> With sacrifice before the rising morn
> *Performed*, my slaughtered lord *have I required*;
> And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,
> Him of the infernal Gods *have I desired*,—[37]

[35 First ed. reads: "with gravel in their shoes, that," &c. One line below, from "Yours" to "*Porson*" (23 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

[36 First ed. reads: "indeed, I never read it. Now," &c.]

[37 "Wordsworth wrote thus to Walter Savage Landor, on the 21st of

I do not see the necessity of *Performed*, which is dull and cumbersome. The second line and the fourth terminate too much alike, and express to a tittle the same meaning: *have I required* and *have I desired* are worse than prosaic; beside which there are four words together of equal length in each.

Southey. I have seen a couplet oftener than once in which every word of the second verse corresponds in measure to every one above it.

Porson. The Scotch have a scabby and a frost-bitten ear for harmony, both in verse and prose; and I remember in *Douglas* two such as you describe:—

> This is the place—the centre of the grove,
> Here stands the oak—the monarch of the wood.

After this whiff of vapor I must refresh myself with a draught

January 1824:—'You have condescended to minute criticism of the *Laodamia*. I concur with you in the first stanza, and had several times attempted to alter it upon your grounds. I cannot, however, accede to your objection to the "second birth," merely because the expression has been degraded by Conventiclers. I certainly meant nothing more by it than the *eadem cura*, and the *largior æther*, &c., of Virgil's Æneid. All religions owe their origin or acceptation to the wish of the human heart to supply in another state of existence the deficiencies of this, and to carry still nearer to perfection what we admire in our present condition, so that there must be many modes of expression arising out of this coincidence, or rather identity of feeling common to all Mythologies; and under this observation I should shelter the phrase from your censure—but I may be wrong in the particular case, though certainly not in the general principle." (See vol. vi., Knight's "Wordsworth.") Wordsworth, however, altered the stanzas quoted in 1827.

The 1st stanza now reads—

> "With sacrifice before the rising morn
> Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired;
> And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades forlorn
> Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required:"

From "I" to "cumbersome" (2 lines) and one line below, from "and" to "meaning," added in 3rd ed. First ed. reads: "prosaic. In another,

> He spake of love," &c.

Second ed. reads: "prosaic; besides which . . . in each.

> He spake of love," &c.

Note in 2nd ed. reads: "The memory of Porson was extraordinary, and quite capable of this repetition."]

of pure poetry, at the bottom of which is the flake of tartar I wish away:—

> He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
> In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
> No fears to beat away, no strife to heal,
> The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
> Spake, as a witness, of a second birth,
> For all that is most perfect upon earth.[38]

How unseasonable is the allusion to *witness* and *second birth!* —which things, however holy and venerable in themselves, come stinking and reeking to us from the conventicle. I desire to find Laodamia in the silent and gloomy mansion of her beloved Protesilaus; not elbowed by the godly butchers in Tottenham-court Road, nor smelling devoutly of ratafia among the sugar-bakers' wives at Blackfriars.

Mythologies should be kept distinct: the fire-place of one should never be subject to the smoke of another. The gods of different countries, when they come together unexpectedly, are jealous gods; and, as our old women say, *turn the house out of windows.*

Southey. A[39] current of rich and bright thoughts runs through the poem. Pindar himself would not on that subject have braced one to more vigor, nor Euripides have breathed into it more tenderness and passion. The first part of the stanza you have just now quoted might have been heard with shouts of rapture in the regions it describes.

Porson. I am not insensible to the warmly chaste morality which is the soul of it, nor indifferent to the benefits that literature on many occasions has derived from Christianity. But poetry is a luxury to which, if she tolerates and permits it, she

[38] The two last lines of this stanza were altered in 1827. They now read—

> "Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
> Revived, with firmer harmony pursued."

First ed. reads: "earth. In a composition such as Sophocles might have exulted to own, and in a stanza the former part of which might have been heard with shouts of rapture in the regions he describes, how unseasonable," &c.]

[39] In 1st and 2nd eds. this speech forms part of Porson's. See preceding note.]

accepts no invitation: she beats down your gates and citadels, levels your high places, and eradicates your groves. For which reason I dwell more willingly with those authors who cannot mix and confound the manners they represent. The hope that we may rescue at Herculaneum a great number of them hath, I firmly believe, kept me alive. Reasonably may the best be imagined to exist in a library of some thousands. It will be recorded to the infamy of the kings and princes now reigning, or rather of those whose feet put into motion their rocking-horses, that they never have made a common cause in behalf of learning; but, on the contrary, have made a common cause against it. The Earth opened her bosom before them, conjuring them to receive again, while it was possible, the glories of their species; and they turned their backs. They pretended that it is not their business or their duty to interfere in the internal affairs of other nations. This is not an internal affair of any; it interests all; it belongs to all: and these scrupulous men have no scruple to interfere in giving their countenance and assistance when a province is to be invaded or a people to be enslaved.

Southey.[40] To neglect what is recoverable in the authors of antiquity is like rowing away from a crew that is making its escape from shipwreck.

Porson. The most contemptible of the Medicean family did more for the advancement of letters than the whole body of existing potentates. If their delicacy is shocked or alarmed at the idea of a proposal to send scientific and learned men to Naples, let them send a brace of pointers as internuncios, and the property is their own. Twenty scholars in seven years might retrieve the worst losses we experience from the bigotry of popes and caliphs. I do not intend to assert that every Herculanean manuscript might within that period be unfolded; but the three first legible sentences might be, which is quite sufficient to inform the intelligent reader whether a farther attempt on the scroll would repay his trouble. There are fewer than thirty Greek authors worth inquiring for: they exist beyond doubt; and beyond doubt they may, by attention, patience, and skill, be brought to light.

[40] From "*Southey*" to "shipwreck" (3 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

Southey.[41] You and I, Mr Porson, are truly and sincerely concerned in the loss of such treasures; but how often have we heard much louder lamentations than ours, from gentlemen who, if they were brought again to light, would never cast their eyes over them, even in the bookseller's window! I have been present at homilies on the corruption and incredulity of the age, and principally on the violation of the Sabbath, from sleek clergymen, canons of cathedrals, who were at the gaming-table the two first hours of that very day; and I have listened to others on the loss of the classics, from men who never took the trouble to turn over half that is remaining to us of Cicero and Livius.

Porson. The Greek language is almost unknown out of England and northern Germany: in the rest of the world, exclusive of Greece, I doubt whether fifty scholars ever read one page of it without a version.

Southey. Give fifteen to Italy, twelve to the Netherlands, as many to France: the remainder will hardly be collected in Sweden, Denmark, Russia, Austria. In regard to Spain and Portugal, we might as well look for them among the Moors and Negroes.

Porson.[42] You are too prodigal to Italy and France. Matthiæ, in his preface to the Greek grammar, speaks of Germany, of England, of Holland; not a word of France,—the country of Stephanus, Budæus, and the Scaligers. Latterly we have seen only Villoison and Larcher fairly escape from the barbarous ignorance around them. Catholic nations in general seem as averse to the Greek language as to the Greek ritual.

Southey.[43] The knowledge of books written in our own is extending daily.

Porson. Although the knowledge too of Greek is extending in England, I doubt whether it is to be found in such large

[41] From "*Southey*" to "Negroes" (20 lines) added in 2nd ed. The whole of this insertion is spoken by Southey. Only five Greek scholars are assigned to France in 2nd ed., and none to Denmark.]

[42] From "*Porson*" to "ritual" (7 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[43] From "*Southey*" to "condition" (17 lines) added in 2nd ed. Second ed. reads: "daily in our country, which, whatever dissatisfaction or disgust its rulers may occasion in you, contains four-fifths of the learned and scientific men now on earth. *Porson.* The position is, I think, incontrovertible; but although the knowledge," &c.]

masses as formerly. Schools and universities, like rills and torrents, roll down some grains of it every season; but the lumps have been long stored up in cabinets. I delight in the diffusion of learning; yet, I must confess it, I am most gratified and transported at finding a large quantity of it in one place: just as I would rather have a solid pat of butter at breakfast than a splash of grease upon the table-cloth, that covers half of it. Do not attempt to defend the idle and inconsiderate knaves who manage our affairs for us; or defend them on some other ground. Prove, if you please, that they have, one after another, been incessantly occupied in rendering us more moral, more prosperous, more free; but abstain, sir, from any allusion to their solicitude on the improvement of our literary condition. With a smaller sum than is annually expended on the appointment of some silly and impertinent young envoy, we might restore all or nearly all those writers of immortal name, whose disappearance has been the regret of Genius for four entire centuries.[44] In my opinion, a few thousand pounds laid out on such an undertaking would be laid out as creditably as on a Persian carpet or a Turkish tent; as creditably as on a collar of rubies and a ball-dress of Brussels lace for our Lady in the manger, or as on gilding for the adoration of princesses and their capuchins, the posteriors and anteriors of Saint Januarius.

[44 First ed. reads: "Genius for three hundred years. In," &c.]

[Altho' the expressions of reviews are nearly the same, it would be curious if Porson should have stumbled on these two together. I find them appended to my first volume, as extracts from the *Monthly Review* of June 1823 and May 1820. One of these extracts is from a criticism on a publication of Hazlitt, in which publication there are strokes as vivid and vigorous as in any work edited these hundred years. I regret all enmities in the literary world, and particularly when they are exercised against the ornaments and glories of our country, against a Wordsworth and a Southey. It has been my fortune to love in general those men most who have thought most differently from me, on subjects wherein others pardon no discordance. I think I have no more right to be angry with a man, whose reason has followed up a process different from what mine has, and is satisfied with the result, than with one who has gone to Venice while I am at Sienna, and who writes to me that he likes the place, and that, although he said once he should settle elsewhere, he shall reside in that city. My political opinions are my only ones, beyond square demonstration, that I am certain will never change. If my muscles have

hardened in them and are fit for no other, I have not on this account the right or inclination to consider a friend untrue or insincere, who declares that he sees more of practical good in an opposite quarter, to that where we agreed to fix the speculative; and that he abandons the dim astounding majesty of mountain scenery, for the refreshing greenness and easy paths of the plain. I have walked always where I must breathe hard, and where such breathing was my luxury; I now sit somewhat stiller and have few aspirations, but I inhale the same atmosphere yet. Now to others. . . . We have amongst us seven or eight great men; a number we never had in former times: why should they act like children? snatching at the coach and horses, or bread and butter across the table, and breaking them and trampling them under foot; rejoicing at the wry faces and loud cries they occasion, and ready to hug and kiss, only at the moment when they are called away! For myself, I neither ask nor deprecate: no compacts, no conventions, no confraternities for me. Let them consider me as a cloud if they will: could they break or dissipate this cloud, which they cannot, it would form again upon some other day. The breath of the universe, directed at once against me, could detach from me but some loose atoms, and such only as ought to fall of themselves. Literature is not the mother who should talk so frequently to her children about chastisement; the most favourite word with her ever since her reappearance amongst us. If chastisement is to be inflicted, let it fall upon the felon, who has no forbearance, no shame, no pity; who attacks the timid and modest, the partner once of his freshest and best assorted opinions, and, holding him by the throat, exults and laughs, and chaunts to young templars and benchers, in a loud clear voice, the ritual of apostacy, as by law established. No; even him let us rather pass quietly; and with patience let us hear others recommend him, for his decorum to be a gentleman of the bed-chamber, for his accuracy a lord of the treasury, for his dexterity a parliamentary leader, or for his equity a judge.]

SECOND CONVERSATION.[1]

Porson. Many thanks, Mr Southey, for this visit in my confinement. I do believe you see me on my last legs; and perhaps you expected it.

[[1] Mr Forster ("Life" 422) is of opinion that the severity shown in this Conversation in the criticism of Wordsworth was due to the displeasure felt by Landor at his conduct during the discussion which arose after Southey's death concerning the publication of his Life and Letters. The criticism of Wordsworth is assuredly severe, and certain of the quotations are curiously incorrect. In both this and the preceding Conversation Landor has allowed Porson to criticise poems not written until after his death. (Blackwood, Dec. 1842. Works ii., 1846. Works iii., 1876.)]

Southey. Indeed, Mr Professor, I expected to find you unwell, according to report; but as your legs have occasionally failed you, both in Cambridge and in London, the same event may happen again many times before the last. The cheerfulness of your countenance encourages me to make this remark.

Porson. There is that soft and quiet and genial humor about you, which raises my spirits and tranquillizes my infirmity. Why (I wonder) have we not always been friends?

Southey. Alas, my good Mr Professor, how often have the worthiest men asked the same question,—not indeed of each other, but of their own hearts,—when age and sickness have worn down their asperities, when rivalships have grown languid, animosities tame, inert, and inexcitable, and when they have become aware of approaching more nearly the supreme perennial fountain of benevolence and truth!

Porson. Am I listening to the language and to the sentiments of a poet? I ask the question with this distinction; for I have often found a wide difference between the sentiments and the language. Generally nothing can be purer or more humane than what is exhibited in modern poetry; but I may mention to you, who are known to be exempt from the vice, that the nearest neighbors in the most romantic scenery,—where every thing seems peace, repose, and harmony,—are captious and carping one at another. When I hear the song of the nightingale, I neglect the naturalist; and in vain does he remind me that its aliment is composed of grubs and worms. Let poets be crop-full of jealousy; let them only sing well: that is enough for me.

Southey. I think you are wrong in your supposition, that the poet and the man are usually dissimilar.

Porson. There is a race of poets,—not however the race of Homer and Dante, Milton and Shakspeare,—but a race of poets there is, which Nature has condemned to a Siamese twinship. Wherever the poet is, there also must the man obtrude obliquely his ill-favored visage. From a drunken connection with Vanity this surplus offspring may always be expected. In no two poets that ever lived do we find the fact so remarkably exemplified as in Byron and Wordsworth. But higher power produces an intimate consciousness of itself; and this consciousness is the parent of tranquillity and repose. Small poets (observe, I do not call

Wordsworth and Byron small poets) are as unquiet as grubs, which in their boneless and bloodless flaccidity struggle and wriggle and die the moment they tumble out of the nutshell and its comfortable drouth. Shakspeare was assailed on every side by rude and beggarly rivals, but he never kicked them out of his way.

Southey. Milton was less tolerant; he shrivelled up the lips of his revilers by the austerity of his scorn. In our last conversation, I remember, I had to defend against you the weaker of the two poets you just now cited, before we came to Milton and Shakspeare. I am always ready to undertake the task. Byron wants no support or setting off, so many workmen have been employed in the construction of his throne, and so many fair hands in the adaptation of his cushion and canopy. But Wordsworth, in his poetry at least, always aimed at—

Porson. My dear Mr Southey, there are two quarters in which you cannot expect the will to be taken for the deed: I mean the women and the critics. Your friend inserts parenthesis in parenthesis, and adds clause to clause, codicil to codicil, with all the circumspection, circuition, wariness, and strictness of an indenture. His client has it hard and fast. But what is an axiom in law is none in poetry. You cannot say in your profession, *plus non vitiat; plus* is the worst vitiator and violator of the Muses and the Graces.

Be sparing of your animadversions on Byron. He will always have more partisans and admirers than any other in your confraternity. He will always be an especial favorite with the ladies, and with all who, like them, have no opportunity of comparing him with the models of antiquity. He possesses the soul of poetry, which is energy; but he wants that ideal beauty which is the sublimer emanation, I will not say of the real, for this is the more real of the two, but of that which is ordinarily subject to the senses. With much that is admirable, he is nearly all that is vicious; a large grasp of small things, without selection and without cohesion. This likewise is the case with the other, without the long hand and the strong fist.

Southey. I have heard that you prefer Crabbe to either.

Porson. Crabbe wrote with a twopenny nail, and scratched rough truths and rogues' facts on mud walls. There is however much in his poetry, and more in his moral character, to admire.

Comparing the smartnesses of Crabbe with Young's, I cannot help thinking that the reverend doctor must have wandered in his Night Thoughts rather too near the future vicar's future mother, so striking is the resemblance. But the vicar, if he was fonder of low company, has greatly more nature and sympathy, greatly more vigor and compression. Young moralized at a distance on some external appearances of the human heart; Crabbe entered it *on all fours*, and told the people what an ugly thing it is inside.

Southey. This simple-minded man is totally free from malice and animosity.

Porson. Rightly in the use of these two powers have you discriminated. Byron is profuse of animosity; but I do believe him to be quite without malice. You have lived among men about the Lakes, who want the vigor necessary for the expansion of animosity, but whose dunghills are warm enough to hatch long egg-strings of malice, after a season.[2]

Southey. It may be so; but why advert to them? In speaking of vigor, surely you cannot mean vigor of intellect? An animal that has been held with lowered nostrils in the Grotto del Cane recovers his senses when he is thrown into the Agnano; but there is no such resuscitation for the writer whose head has been bent over that poetry which, while it intoxicates the brain, deadens or perverts the energies of the heart. In vain do pure waters reflect the heavens to him; his respiration is on the earth and earthly things: and it is not the whispers of wisdom or the touches of affection, it is only the shout of the multitude, that can excite him. It soon falls, and he with it.

Porson. Do not talk in this manner with the ladies, young or old; a little profligacy is very endearing to them.

Southey. Not to those with whom I am likely to talk.

Porson. Before we continue our discussion on the merits of Mr Wordsworth, and there are many great ones, I must show my inclination to impartiality by adducing a few instances of faultiness in Byron. For you must bear in mind that I am counsel for the crown against your friend, and that it is not my business in this place to call witnesses to his good character.

Southey. You leave me no doubt of that. But do not speak

[2 This reads like an attack upon De Quincey.]

in generalities when you speak of him. Lay your finger on those places in particular which most displease you.

Porson. It would benumb it. Nevertheless, I will do as you bid me; and, if ever I am unjust in a single tittle, reprehend me instantly. But at present, to Byron as I proposed. Give me the volume. Ay, that is it.

Southey. Methinks it smells of his own favourite beverage, gin-and-water.

Porson. No bad perfume after all.

> " Nought of life left, save a quivering
> When his limbs were slightly shivering."

Pray, what does the second line add to the first, beside empty words?

> " Around a slaughter'd army lay."

What follows?

> " No more to combat or to bleed."

Verily! Well; more the pity than the wonder. According to historians (if you doubt my fidelity I will quote them), slaughtered armies have often been in this condition.

> " We sat down and wept by the waters
> Of Babel, and thought of the day
> When our foe, in the hue of his slaughters,
> Made Salem's high places his prey."

A prey "in the hue of his slaughters." This is very pathetic; but not more so than the thought it suggested to me, which is plainer:—

> " We sat down and wept by the waters
> Of Camus, and thought of the day
> When damsels would show their red garters
> In their hurry to scamper away."

Let us see what we can find where this other slip of paper divides the pages.

> " Let he who made thee."

Some of us at Cambridge continue to say, " Let *him* go." Is this grammatical form grown obsolete? Pray, let *I* know. Some of us are also much in the habit of pronouncing *real* as if it were a

dissyllable, and *ideal* as if it were a trisyllable. All the Scotch deduct a syllable from each of these words, and Byron's mother was Scotch.

What have we here?

"And spoil'd her goodly lands to gild his waste."

I profess my abhorrence at *gilding* even a few square leagues of waste.

"Thy fanes, thy temples."

Where is the difference?

"Rustic plough."

There are more of these than of city ploughs or court ploughs.

"Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls."

What think you of a desolate cloud?

"O'er Venice' lovely walls"?

Where poets have omitted, as in this instance, the possessive *s*, denoting the genitive case, as we are accustomed to call it, they are very censurable. Few blemishes in style are greater. But here, where no letter *s* precedes it, the fault is the worst. In the next line we find

"Athens' armies."

Further on, he makes Petrarca[3] say that his passion for Laura was a guilty one. If it was, Petrarca did not think it so, and still less would he have said it.

Southey. This arises from his ignorance that *reo* in Italian poetry means not only *guilty*, but *cruel*, and *sorrowful*.

Porson. He fancies that Shakspeare's Forest of Arden is the Belgian Forest of the same name, differently spelled, Ardennes; whereas it began near Stratford-upon-Avon, and extended to Red-ditch and the Ridgeway, the boundary of Warwickshire and Worcestershire, having for its centre the little town Henley, called to this day Henley-in-Arden.

Southey. You will never find in Wordsworth such faults as these.

[3 Byron's account of Petrarch is to be found in Note VIII. to the fourth Canto of "Childe Harold."]

Porson. Perhaps not; but let us see. I am apprehensive that we may find graver, and without the excuse of flightiness or incitation. We will follow him, if you please, where you attempted (as coopers do in their business more successfully) to draw together the staves of his quarter-cask, by putting a little fire of your own chips in it. Yet they start and stare widely; and even your practised hand will scarcely bring it in to such condition as to render it a sound or salable commodity. You are annoyed, I perceive, at this remark. I honour your sensibility. There are, indeed, base souls which genius may illuminate, but cannot elevate.

> "Struck with an ear-ache by all stronger lays,
> They writhe with anguish at another's praise."

Meantime, what exquisite pleasure must you have felt in being the only critic of our age and country laboring for the advancement of those who might be thought your rivals! No other ventured to utter a syllable in behalf of your friend's poetry. While he "wheeled his drony flight," it lay among the thread-papers and patch-work of the sedater housewives, and was applied by them to the younger part of the family as an antidote against all levity of behavior. The last time we met, you not only defended your fellow-soldier while he was lying on the ground, trodden and wounded and crying out aloud, but you lifted him up on your shoulders in the middle of the fight. Presently we must try our strength again, if you persist in opposing him to the dramatists of Athens.

Southey. You mistake me widely in imagining me to have ranked him with the Greek tragedians, or any great tragedians whatsoever. I only said that, in one single poem, Sophocles or Euripides would probably have succeeded no better.

Porson. This was going far enough. But I will not oppose my unbelief to your belief, which is at all times the pleasanter. Poets, I find, are beginning to hold critics cheap, and are drilling a company out of their own body. At present, in marching they lift up their legs too high, and firing they shut their eyes.

Southey. There is little use in arguing with the conceited and inexperienced, who immersed in the slough of ignorance cry out, "There you are wrong; there we differ," &c. Wry necks are always stiff, and hot heads are still worse when they grow cool.

Porson. Let me ask you, who being both a poet and a critic are likely to be impartial, whether we who restore the noble forms which time and barbarism have disfigured are not more estimable than those artisans who mould in coarse clay, and cover with plashy chalk, their shepherds and shepherdesses for Bagnigge-Wells?

Southey. I do not deny nor dispute it; but awarding due praise to such critics, of whom the number in our own country is extremely small (bishoprics having absorbed and suffocated half the crew), I must, in defence of those particularly whom they have criticised too severely, profess my opinion that our poetry of late years hath gained to the full as much as it hath lost.

Porson. The sea also of late years, and all other years too, has followed the same law. We have gained by it empty cockle-shells, dead jelly-fish, sand, shingle, and voluminous weeds. On the other hand, we have lost our exuberant meadow-ground, slowly abraded, stealthily bitten off, morsel after morsel; we have lost our fat salt-marshes; we have lost our solid turf, besprinkled with close flowers; we have lost our broad umbrageous fences, and their trees and shrubs and foliage of plants innumerably various; we have lost, in short, every thing that delighted us with its inexhaustible richness, and aroused our admiration at its irregular and unrepressed luxuriance.

Southey. I would detract and derogate from no man; but pardon me if I am more inclined toward him who improves our own literature, than toward him who elucidates any other.

Porson. Our own is best improved by the elucidation of others. Among all the bran in the little bins of Mr Wordsworth's beer-cellar, there is not a legal quart of that stout old English beverage with which the good Bishop of Dromore regaled us. The buff jerkins we saw in Chevy Chase please me better than the linsey-woolsey which enwraps the puffy limbs of our worthy host at Grassmere.

Southey. Really this, if not random malice, is ill-directed levity. Already you have acquired that fame and station to which nobody could oppose your progress: why not let him have his?

Porson. So he shall; this is the mark I am at. It is a difficult thing to set a weak man right, and it is seldom worth

the trouble; but it is infinitely more difficult, when a man is intoxicated by applauses, to persuade him that he is going astray. The more tender and coaxing we are, the oftener is the elbow jerked into our sides. There are three classes of sufferers under criticism,—the querulous, the acquiescent, and the contemptuous. In the two latter there is usually something of magnanimity; but in the querulous we always find the imbecile, the vain, and the mean-spirited. I do not hear that you ever have condescended to notice any attack on your poetical works, either in note or preface. Meanwhile, your neighbor would allure us into his cottage by setting his sheep-dog at us; which guardian of the premises runs after and snaps at every pebble thrown to irritate him.

Southey. Pray, leave these tropes and metaphors, and acknowledge that Wordsworth has been scornfully treated.

Porson. Those always will be who show one weakness at having been attacked on another. I admire your sauvity of temper, and your consciousness of worth; your disdain of obloquy, and your resignation to the destinies of authorship. Never did either poet or lover gain any thing by complaining.

Southey. Such sparks as our critics are in general give neither warmth nor light, and only make people stare and stand out of the way, lest they thould fall on them.

Porson. Those who have assaulted you and Mr Wordsworth are perhaps less malicious than unprincipled; the pursuivants of power, or the running footmen of faction. Your patience is admirable; his impatience is laughable. Nothing is more amusing than to see him raise his bristles and expose his tusk at every invader of his brushwood, every marauder of his hips and haws.

Southey. Among all the races of men, we English are at once the most generous and the most ill-tempered. We all carry sticks in our hands to cut down the heads of the higher poppies.

Porson. A very high poppy, and surcharged with Lethean dew, is that before us. But continue.

Southey. I would have added, that each resents in another any injustice; and resents it indeed so violently as to turn unjust on the opposite side. Wordsworth, in whose poetry you yourself admit there are many and great beauties, will, I am afraid, be tossed out of his balance by a sudden jerk in raising him.

Porson. Nothing more likely. The reaction may be as precipitate as the pull is now violent against him. Injudicious friends will cause him less uneasiness, but will do him greater mischief, than intemperate opponents.

Southey. You cannot be accused of either fault; but you demand too much, and pardon no remissness. However, you have at no time abetted by your example the paltry pelters of golden fruit paled out from them.

Porson. Removed alike from the crown and the *coterie*, I have always avoided, with timid prudence, the bird-cage walk of literature. I have withholden from Herman[4] and some others a part of what is due to them; and I regret it. Sometimes I have been arrogant, never have I been malicious. Unhappily, I was educated in a school of criticism where the exercises were too gladiatorial. Looking at my elders in it, they appeared to me so ugly—in part from their contortions, and in part from their scars—that I suspected it must be a dangerous thing to wield a scourge of vipers; and I thought it no very creditable appointment to be linkboy or pander at an alley leading down to the Furies. Age and infirmity have rendered me milder than I was. I am loath to fire off my gun in the warren which lies before us; loath to startle the snug little creatures, each looking so comfortable at the mouth of its burrow, or skipping about at short distances, or frisking and kicking up the sand along the thriftless heath. You have shown me some very good poetry in your author; I have some very bad in him to show you. Each of our actions is an incitement to improve him. But what we cannot improve or alter, lies in the constitution of the man: the determination to hold you in one spot until you have heard him through; the reluctance that any thing should be lost; the unconsciousness that the paring is less nutritious and less savory than the core; in short, the prolix, the prosaic; a sickly sameness of colour; a sad deficiency of vital heat.

Southey. Where the language is subdued and somewhat cold, there may nevertheless be internal warmth and spirit. There is a

[4] See Watson's "Life of Porson" for the history of Porson's attack upon Hermann, Wakefield, and many others. Landor may have had in mind the well-known epigram on Hermann, quoted at page 260 of the life. "The Germans in Greek, Are sadly to seek," &c.]

paleness in intense fires; they do not flame out nor sparkle. As you know, Mr Professor, it is only a weak wine that sends the cork up to the ceiling.

Porson. I never was fond of the florid; but I would readily pardon the weak wine you allude to, for committing this misdemeanor. Upon my word, I have no such complaint to make against it. I said little at the time about these poems, and usually say little more on better. In our praises and censures, we should see before us one sole object: instruction. A single well-set post, with a few plain letters upon it, directs us better than fifty that turn about and totter, covered as they may be from top to bottom with coronals and garlands.

Southey. We have about a million critics in Great Britain; not a soul of which critics entertains the slightest doubt of his own infallibility. You, with all your learning and all your canons of criticism, will never make them waver.

Porson. We will not waste our breath on the best of them. Rather let me turn toward you, so zealous, so ardent, so indefatigable a friend, and, if reports are true, so ill-requited. When your client was the ridicule of all the wits in England, of whom Canning and Frere were foremost, by your indignation at injustice he was righted, and more than righted. For although you attributed to him what perhaps was not greatly above his due, yet they who acknowledge your authority and contend under your banner have carried him much further; nay, further, I apprehend, than is expedient or safe; and they will drop him before the day closes, where there is nobody to show the way home.

Southey. Could not you, Mr Professor, do that good service to him, which others in another province have so often done to you?

Porson. Nobody better, nobody with less danger from interruptions. But I must be even more enthusiastic than you are, if I prefer this excursion to your conversation. My memory, although the strongest part of me, is apt to stagger and swerve under verses piled incompactly. In our last meeting you had him mostly to yourself, and you gave me abundantly of the best; at present, while my gruel is before me, it appears no unseasonable time to throw a little salt into both occasionally, as may suit my palate. You will not be displeased?

Southey. Certainly not, unless you are unjust; nor even then, unless I find the injustice to be founded on ill-will.

Porson. That cannot be. I stand

> "Despicere unde queam tales, passimque videre
> Errare."

Beside, knowing that my verdicts will be registered and recorded, I dare not utter a hasty or an inconsiderate one.* I lay it down as an axiom, that languor is the cause or the effect of most disorders, and is itself the very worst in poetry. Wordsworth's is an instrument which has no trumpet-stop.

Southey. But, such as it is, he blows it well. Surely it is something to have accompanied sound sense with pleasing harmony, whether in verse or prose.

Porson. What is the worth of a musical instrument which has no high key? Even Pan's pipe rises above the baritones; yet I never should mistake it for an organ.

Southey. It is evident that you are ill-disposed to countenance the moderns: I mean principally the living.

Porson. They are less disposed to countenance one another.

Southey. Where there is genius there should be geniality. The curse of quarrelsomeness, of hand against every man, was inflicted on the children of the desert; not on those who pastured their flocks on the fertile banks of the Euphrates, or contemplated the heavens from the elevated ranges of Chaldea.

Porson. Let none be cast down by the malice of their contemporaries, or surprised at the defection of their associates, when he himself who has tended more than any man living to purify the poetry and to liberalize the criticism of his nation, is represented, by one whom he has called "inoffensive and virtuous," as an author all whose poetry is "not worth five shillings," and of whom another has said that "his verses sound like dumb-bells." Such are the expressions of two among your friends and familiars, both under obligations to you for the earliest and weightiest testimony in their favor. It would appear as if the exercise of the poetical faculty left irritation and weakness behind it, depriving its possessor at once of love and modesty, and making him resemble a spoiled child, who most indulges in its frowardness when you

* [See Appendix.]

exclaim, "What a spoiled child it is!" and carry it crying and kicking out of the room. Your poetical neighbours, I hear, complain bitterly that you never have lauded them at large in your *Critical Reviews*.

Southey. I never have; because one grain of commendation more to the one than the other would make them enemies; and no language of mine would be thought adequate by either to his deserts. Each could not be called the greatest poet of the age; and by such compliance I should have been for ever divested of my authority as a critic. I lost, however, no opportunity of commending heartily what is best in them; and I have never obtruded on any one's notice what is amiss, but carefully concealed it. I wish you were equally charitable.[5]

Porson. I will be; and generous too. There are several things in these volumes, beside that which you recited, containing just thoughts poetically expressed. Few, however, are there which do not contain much of the superfluous, and more of the prosaic. For one nod of approbation, I therefore give two of drowsiness. You accuse me of injustice, not only to this author, but to all the living. Now Byron is living; there is more spirit in Byron; Scott is living; there is more vivacity and variety in Scott. Byron exhibits *disjecti membra poetæ;* and strong muscles quiver throughout, but rather like galvanism than healthy life. There is a freshness in all Scott's scenery; a vigor and distinctness in all his characters. He seems the brother-in-arms of Froissart. I admire his *Marmion* in particular. Give me his massy claymore, and keep in the cabinet or the boudoir the jewelled hilt of the oriental dirk. The pages which my forefinger keeps open for you contain a thing in the form of a sonnet; a thing to which, for insipidity, *tripe au naturel* is a dainty.

> "Great men have been among us, hands that penned
> And tongues that uttered wisdom; better none.
> The later Sydney, Marvel, Harrington,
> Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend."

[5 "I myself get the worthless poems of some good-natured person, whom I know; I am aware what review phrases go for, and contrive to give that person no pain, and deal out such milk-and-water praise as will do no harm; to speak of smooth versification and moral tendency, &c., will take in some to buy the book. . . I have rarely scratched without giving a plaister for it." Southey's "Life and Letters." Letter to Wynn, p. 197.]

When he potted these fat lampreys, he forgot the condiments, which the finest lampreys want; but how close and flat he has laid them! I see nothing in poetry, since

"Four-and-twenty fiddlers all in a row,"

fit to compare with it. How the good men and true stand, shoulder to shoulder, and keep one another up!

Southey. In these censures and sarcasms, you forget

"Alcandrumque Haliumque Noemonaque Prytanimque."

From the Spanish I could bring forward many such.

Porson. But here is a sonnet; and the sonnet admits not that approach to the prosaic which is allowable in the ballad, particularly in the ballad of action. For which reason I never laughed, as many did, at

"Lord Lion King at Arms."

Scott knew what he was about. In his chivalry, and in all the true, gayety is mingled with strength, and facility with majesty. Lord Lion may be defended by the practice of the older poets, who describe the like scenes and adventures. There is much resembling it, for instance, in *Chevy Chase*. *Marmion* is a poem of chivalry, partaking (in some measure) of the ballad, but rising in sundry places to the epic, and closing with a battle worthy of the *Iliad*. Ariosto has demonstrated that a romance may be so adorned by the apparatus, and so elevated by the spirit of poetry, as to be taken for an epic; but it has a wider field of its own, with outlying forests and chases. Spanish and Italian poetry often seems to run in extremely slender veins through a vast extent of barren ground.

Southey. But often, too, it is pure and plastic. The republicans, whose compact phalanx you have unsparingly ridiculed in Wordsworth's sonnet, make surely no sorrier a figure than

"A Don Alvaro de Luna
Condestable de Castilla
El Re Don Juan el Segundo."

Porson. What an admirable Spanish scholar must Mr Wordsworth be! How completely has he transfused into his own compositions all the spirit of those verses! Nevertheless, it

is much to be regretted that, in resolving on simplicity, he did not place himself under the tuition of Burns; which quality Burns could have taught him in perfection: but others he never could have imparted to such an auditor. He would have sung in vain to him

"Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,"—

a song more animating than ever Tyrtæus sang to the fife before the Spartans. But simplicity in Burns is never stale and unprofitable. In Burns there is no waste of words out of an ill-shouldered sack; no troublesome running backward and forward of little, idle, ragged ideas; no ostentation of sentiment in the surtout of selfishness. Where was I?—

"Better none . . . The later Sidney . . . Young Vane . .
These moralists could act . . and . . . comprehend!"

We might expect as much if "*none were better.*"

"They knew how genuine glory was . . . put on!"

What is genuine is not *put on.*

"Taught us how rightfully . . . a nation" . .

Did what? Took up arms?—No such thing. *Remonstrated?*—No, nor that. What then?—Why, "*shone!*" I am inclined to take the *shine* out of him for it. But how did the nation "rightfully *shine?*"—In *splendor!*

"Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendor!"

Now the secret is out; make the most of it. Another thing they taught us,—

"What strength was."

They did indeed, with a vengeance. Furthermore, they taught us what we never could have expected from such masters,—

"What strength was . . . *that could not bend*
But in magnanimous *meekness.*"

Brave Oliver! brave and honest Ireton! We know pretty well where your magnanimity lay; we never could so cleverly find

out your meekness. Did you leave it peradventure on the window-seat at Whitehall? The "later Sydney and young Vane, who could call Milton friend," and Milton himself, were gentlemen of your kidney, and they were all as meek as Moses with their arch-enemy.

"Perpetual emptiness: unceasing change."

How could the *change* be unceasing if the *emptiness* was perpetual?

"No single volume paramount: no *code*."

This is untrue. There is a Code, and the best in Europe: there was none promulgated under our Commonwealth.

"No master-spirit, no determined road,
And equally a want of books and men."

Southey. I do not agree in this opinion; for although of late years France hath exhibited no man of exalted wisdom or great worth, yet surely her Revolution cast up several both intellectual and virtuous. But, like fishes in dark nights and wintry weather allured by deceptive torches, they came to the surface only to be speared.

Porson. Although there were many deplorable ends in the French Revolution, there was none so deplorable as the last sonnet's. So diffuse and pointless and aimless is not only this, but fifty more, that the author seems to have written them in hedger's gloves, on blotting paper. If he could by any contrivance have added to

"Perpetual emptiness unceasing change,"

or some occasional change at least, he would have been more tolerable.

Southey. He has done it lately: he has written, although not yet published, a vast number of sonnets on Capital Punishment.

Porson. Are you serious? Already he has inflicted it far and wide, for divers attempts made upon him to extort his meaning.

Southey. Remember, poets superlatively great have composed things below their dignity. Suffice it to mention only Milton's translation of the Psalms.

Porson. Milton was never half so wicked a regicide as when he lifted up his hand and smote King David. He has atoned for it, however, by composing a magnificent psalm of his own, in the form of a sonnet.

Southey. You mean on the massacre of the Protestants in Piedmont? This is indeed the noblest of sonnets.

Porson. There are others in Milton comparable to it, but none elsewhere. In the poems of Shakspeare, which are printed as sonnets, there sometimes is a singular strength and intensity of thought, with little of that imagination which was afterward to raise him highest in the universe of poetry. Even the interest we take in the private life of this miraculous man cannot keep the volume in our hands long together. We acknowledge great power, but we experience great weariness. Were I a poet, I would much rather have written the *Allegro* or the *Penseroso* than all those, and moreover than nearly all that portion of our metre which, wanting a definite term, is ranged under the capitulary of lyric.

Southey. Evidently you dislike the sonnet; otherwise there are very many in Wordsworth which would have obtained your approbation.

Porson. I have no objection to see mince-meat put into small patty-pans, all of equal size, with ribs at odd distances: my objection lies mainly where I find it without salt or succulence. Milton was glad, I can imagine, to seize upon the sonnet, because it restricted him from a profuse expression of what soon becomes tiresome,—praise. In addressing it to the Lord Protector, he was aware that prolixity of speech was both unnecessary and indecorous: in addressing it to Vane, and Lawrence, and Lawes, he felt that friendship is never the stronger for running through long periods; and in addressing it to

"Captain, or Colonel, or Knight-at-Arms,"

he might be confident that fourteen such glorious lines were a bulwark sufficient for his protection against a royal army.

Southey. I am highly gratified at your enthusiasm. A great poet represents a great portion of the human race. Nature delegated to Shakspeare the interests and direction of the whole: to Milton a smaller part, but with plenary power over it; and she

bestowed on him such fervor and majesty of eloquence as on no other mortal in any age.

Porson. Perhaps, indeed, not on Demosthenes himself.

Southey. Without many of those qualities of which a loftier genius is constituted, without much fire, without a wide extent of range, without an eye that can look into the heart, or an organ that can touch it, Demosthenes had great dexterity and great force. By the union of these properties he always was impressive on his audience; but his orations bear less testimony to the seal of genius than the dissertations of Milton do.

Porson. You judge correctly that there are several parts of genius in which Demosthenes is deficient, although in none whatever of the consummate orator. In that character there is no necessity for stage-exhibitions of wit, however well it may be received in an oration from the most persuasive and the most stately: Demosthenes, when he catches at wit, misses it, and falls flat in the mire. But by discipline and training, by abstinence from what is florid and too juicy, and by loitering with no idle words on his way, he acquired the hard muscles of a wrestler, and nobody could stand up against him with success or impunity.

Southey. Milton has equal strength, without an abatement of beauty: not a sinew sharp or rigid, not a vein varicose or inflated. Hercules killed robbers and ravishers with his knotted club; he cleansed also royal stables by turning whole rivers into them: Apollo, with no labor or effort, overcame the Python; brought round him, in the full accordance of harmony, all the Muses; and illuminated with his sole splendor the universal world. Such is the difference I see between Demosthenes and Milton.

Porson. Would you have any thing more of Mr Wordsworth, after the contemplation of two men who resemble a god and a demigod in the degrees of power?

Southey. I do not believe you can find in another of his poems so many blemishes and debilities as you have pointed out.

Porson. Within the same space, perhaps not. But my complaint is not against a poverty of thought or expression here and there; it is against the sickliness and prostration of the whole body. I should never have thought it worth my while to renew

and continue our conversation on it, unless that frequently such discussions lead to something better than the thing discussed; and unless we had abundant proofs that heaviness, taken opportunely, is the parent of hilarity. The most beautiful iris rises in bright expanse out of the minutest watery particles. Little fond as I am of quoting my own authority, permit me to repeat, in this sick chamber, an observation I once made in another almost as sick:—

> "When wine and gin are gone and spent,
> Small beer is then most excellent."

But small beer itself is not equally small nor equally vapid. Our friend's poetry, like a cloak of gum-elastic, makes me sweat without keeping me warm. With regard to the texture and sewing, what think you of

> "No thorns can pierce *those* tender feet,
> Whose *life* was as the violet sweet"?

Southey. It should have been written "*her* tender feet;" because, as the words stand, it is the *life* of the tender feet that is sweet as the violet.

Porson. If there is a Wordsworth school, it certainly is not a grammar school. Is there any lower? It must be a school for very little boys, and a rod should be hung up in the centre. Take another example:—

> "There is a *blessing* in the air,
> Which *seems* a sense of joy to yield."

Was ever line so inadequate to its purpose as the second? If the blessing is evident and certain, the sense of joy arising from it must be evident and certain also, not merely seeming. Whatever only seems to yield a sense of joy is scarcely a blessing. The verse adds nothing to the one before, but rather tends to empty it of the little it conveys.

> "And shady groves, for recreation *framed*."

"Recreation!" and in groves that are "*framed!*"

> "With high respect and gratitude sincere."

This is indeed a good end of a letter, but not of a poem. I am

weary of decomposing these lines of sawdust: they verily would disgrace any poetry-professor.

Southey. Acknowledging the prosaic flatness of the last verse you quoted, the sneer with which you pronounced the final word seems to me unmerited.

Porson. That is not gratitude which is not "sincere." A scholar ought to write nothing so incorrect as the phrase; a poet nothing so imbecile as the verse.

Southey. *Sincere* conveys a stronger sense to most understandings than the substantive alone would; words which we can do without are not therefore useless. Many may be of service and efficacy to certain minds, which other minds pass over inobservantly; and there are many which, however light in themselves, wing the way for a well-directed point that could never reach the heart without it.

Porson. This is true in general, but here inapplicable. I will tell you what is applicable on all occasions, both in poetry and prose—*αἰεὶ ἀριστεύειν*—without reference to weak or common minds. If we give an entertainment, we do not set on the table pap and panada, just because a guest may be liable to indigestion: we rather send these dismal dainties to his chamber, and treat our heartier friends *opiparously*. I am wandering. If we critics are logical, it is the most that can be required at our hands: we should go out of our record if we were philosophical.

Southey. Without both qualities not even the lightest poetry should be reprehended. They do not exclude wit, which sometimes shows inexactness where mensuration would be tardy and incommodious.

Porson. I fear I am at my wits' end under this exhausted receiver Here are, however, a few more *Excerpta* for you. I shall add but few; although I have marked with my pencil, in these two small volumes, more than seventy spots of sterility or quagmire. Mr Wordsworth has hitherto had for his critics men who uncovered and darkened his blemishes in order to profit by them, and afterward expounded his songs and expatiated on his beauties in order to obtain the same result,—like picture-cleaners, who besmear a picture all over with washy dirtiness, then wipe away one-half of it, making it whiter than it ever was before. And nothing draws such crowds to the window.

I must make you walk with me up and down the deck, else nothing could keep you from sickness in this hull. How do you feel? Will you sit down again?

Southey. I will hear you, and bear with you.

Porson.

"I on the earth will go plodding on
By myself cheerfully, till the day is done."

In what other author do you find such heavy trash?

"How do you live, and what is it you do?"

Show me any thing like this in the worst poet that ever lived, and I will acknowledge that I am the worst critic. A want of sympathy is sometimes apparent in the midst of poetical pretences. Before us a gang of gypsies,—perhaps after a long journey, perhaps after a marriage, perhaps after the birth of a child among them,—are found resting a whole day in one place. What is the reflection on it?

"The *mighty* moon;
This way she looks, *as if at them*,
And they regard her not!
Oh! better wrong and strife;
Rather vain deeds or evil than such life!"[6]

Mr Southey! is this the man you represented to me, in our last conversation, as innocent and philosophical? What! better be guilty of robbery or bloodshed than not be looking at the moon? —better let the fire go out and the children cry with hunger and

[6 "As a critic [Porson] used to say, 'Whatever you quote or collate, do it fairly and accurately, whether it be Joe Miller or Tom Thumb, or The Three Children Sliding on the Ice,' and his practice was in conformity with his precept." Watson's "Life," 356. It is curious that while the passages from Byron are accurately cited, there are several errors in those from Wordsworth. The line from the Dedication of the Excursion runs, "Of high respect and gratitude sincere," and is not the last line of the sonnet. The quotation from the "Gipsies" is perverted almost out of knowledge. Below, two lines are quoted from "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," as though they occurred consecutively, whereas they are 3 lines apart in succeeding stanzas. It must be admitted that Wordsworth might have written, "Sad case it was, as you may think, As every one who knew her says." But he did not unite the two lines, and the critic should not have done it for him. It is not too much to say that Landor's memory in quotations was curiously untrustworthy.]

cold? The philanthropy of poets is surely ethereal, and is here, indeed, a matter of moonshine.

Southey. The sentiment is indefensible. But in the stoutest coat a stitch may give way somewhere.

Porson. Our business is, in this place, with humanity. We will go forward, if you please, to religion. Poets may take great liberties; but not much above the nymphs: they must be circumspect and orderly with gods and goddesses of any account and likelihood. Although the ancients laid many children at the door of Jupiter which he never could be brought to acknowledge, yet it is downright impiety to attribute to the God of Mercy, as his, so ill-favored a vixen as Slaughter.

Southey. We might enter into a long disquisition on this subject.

Porson. God forbid we should do all we might do! Have you rested long enough? Come along, then, to Goody Blake's.

"*Old* Goody Blake was *old* and poor."

What is the consequence?

"Ill-fed she was, and thinly clad,
And any man who passed her door
Might see" . .

What might he see?—

"How *poor* a hut she had."

Southey. Ease and simplicity are two expressions often confounded and misapplied. We usually find ease arising from long practice, and sometimes from a delicate ear without it; but simplicity may be rustic and awkward, of which it must be acknowledged there are innumerable examples in these volumes. But surely it would be a pleasanter occupation to recollect the many that are natural, and to search out the few that are graceful.

Porson. We have not yet taken our leave of Goody Blake.

"All day she spun in her *poor* dwelling,
And then 'twas three hours' work at night;
Alas! 'twas hardly worth the telling."

I am quite of that opinion.

"But when the ice our streams *did fetter*,"—

Which was the fetterer? We may guess, but not from the grammar,—

> "Oh then how her old bones would shake!
> You would have said, *if you had met her*,"—

Now, what would you have said? "Goody! come into my house, and warm yourself with a pint of ale at the kitchen fire"? No such naughty thing,—

> "You would have said, if you had met her,
> *'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake!*"

Southey. If you said only *that*, you must have been the colder of the two, and God had done less for you than for her.

Porson.

> "Sad case it was, *as you may think*,
> *As every one who knew her says*."

Now, mind ye! all this balderdash is from "Poems purely of the Imagination." Such is what is notified to us in the title-page. In spite of a cold below zero, I hope you are awake, Mr Southey! How do you find nose and ears?—all safe and sound? Are the acoustics in tolerable order for harmony? Listen then.* Here follows "An anecdote for Fathers, showing how the practice of Lying may be taught." Such is the title, a somewhat prolix one: but for the soul of me I cannot find out the lie, with all my experience in those matters.

> "Now tell me *had* you rather be?"

Cannot our writers perceive that "had be" is not English? "Would you rather be" is grammatical. "*I'd*" sounds much the same when it signifies "I would." The latter with slighter contraction is "I'ou'd;" hence the corruption goes farther.

Southey. This is just and true; but we must not rest too often, too long, or too pressingly, on verbal criticism.

Porson. Do you, so accurate a grammarian, say this? To pass over such vulgarisms,—which indeed the worst writers seldom fall into,—if the words are silly, idle, or inapplicable, what becomes of the sentence? Those alone are to be classed as verbal critics who can catch and comprehend no more than a word here and there, and who lay more stress upon it, if faulty, than

* [See Appendix.]

upon all the beauties in the best authors. But unless we, who sit perched and watchful on a higher branch than the word-catchers,* and who live on somewhat more substantial than syllables, do catch the word, that which is dependent on the word must escape us also. Now do me the favor to read the rest; for I have only just breath enough to converse, and your voice will give advantages to the poetry which mine cannot.

Southey (*reads*).

"In careless mood he look'd at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, 'At Kilve I'd rather be
Than here at Liswyn-farm.'
Now, little Edward, *say why so*,
My little Edward, *tell me why*."

Porson. Where is the difference of meaning betwixt

"Little Edward, *say why so*,

and

"Little Edward, *tell me why*"?

Southey (*reads*).

"I cannot tell, I do not know."

Porson. Again, where is the difference between "I cannot tell" and "I do not know"?

Southey (*reads*).

"Why, this is strange, said I."

Porson. And I join in the opinion, if he intends it for poetry.

Southey (*reads*).

"For here are woods, hills smooth and warm,—
There surely must some reason be."

Porson. This is among the least awkward of his inversions, which are more frequent in him, and more awkward, than in any of his contemporaries. Somewhat less so would be

"Surely some reason there must be,"

or—

"Some reason surely there must be,

or—

"Some reason there must surely be."

* "Like word-catchers that live on syllables."—*Pope.*

Without ringing more changes, which we might do, he had the choice of four inversions, and he has taken the worst.

Southey (*reads*).

"His head he raised: there was *in sight*,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain,"—

Porson. What tautology, what trifling!

Southey (*reads*),—

"Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane."

Porson. Can we wonder that the boy saw "*plain*" "a broad and gilded vane" on the house-top just before him?

Southey (*reads*).

"Thus did the boy his tongue *unlock*,"

Porson. I wish the father had kept the Bramah key in his breeches pocket.

Southey (*reads*),—

"And eased his mind with this reply,"—

Porson. When he had written "did unlock," he should likewise have written "and ease," not "and eased."

Southey (*reads*),—

"At Kilve there was no weather-cock,
And that's the reason why.
O dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn."

Porson. What is flat ought to be plain; but who can expound to me the thing here signified? Who can tell me where is the lie, and which is the liar? If the lad told a lie, why praise him so? And if he spoke the obvious truth, what has he taught the father? "The hundredth part" of the lore communicated by the child to the parent may content *him*; but whoever is contented with a hundredfold more than all they both together have given *us* cannot be very ambitious of becoming a senior wrangler. These, in good truth, are verses

"Pleni ruris et inficetiarum."

"Dank, limber verses, stuffed with lakeside sedges,
And propped with rotten stakes from broken hedges."

In the beginning of these I forebore to remark

"On Kilve by the *green* sea."

When I was in Somersetshire, Neptune had not parted with his cream-coloured horses, and there was no *green* sea within the horizon. The ancients used to give to the sea the color they saw in it: Homer *dark-blue*, as in the Hellespont, the Ionian, and Ægæan; Virgil *blue-green*, as along the coast of Naples and Sorrento. I suspect, from his character, he never went a league off land. He kept usually, both in person and poetry, to the *vada cærula*.

Southey. But he hoisted purple sails, and the mother of his Æneas was at the helm.

Porson. How different from Mr Wordsworth's wash-tub, pushed on the sluggish lake by a dumb idiot! We must leave the sea-shore for the ditch-side, and get down to "the small Celandine." I will now relieve you: give me the book.

"Pleasures newly found are sweet,"—

What a discovery! I never heard of any pleasures that are not,—

"When they lie about our feet."

Does that make them the sweeter?

"February last,"—

How poetical!

"February last, my heart
First at sight of thee was glad;
All unheard-of as thou art,
Thou must needs, *I think*, have had,
Celandine! and long ago,
Praise of which I nothing know."

What an inversion! A club-foot is not enough, but the heel is where the toe should be.

"*I have not a doubt but he*
Whosoe'er the man might be,
Who the first with pointed rays
(*Workman worthy to be sainted*)
Set the signboard in a blaze," &c.

Really, is there any girl of fourteen whose poetry, being like this, the fondest mother would lay before her most intimate friends? If a taste for what the French call *niaiserie* were prevalent, he who should turn his ridicule so effectively against it as to put it entirely out of fashion would perform a far greater service than that glorious wit, Cervantes, who shattered the last helmet of knight-errantry. For in knight-errantry there was the stout, there was the strenuous, there was sound homeliness under courtly guise, and the ornamental was no impediment to the manly. But in *niaiserie* there are ordinarily the debilitating fumes of self-conceit, and nothing is there about it but what is abject and ignoble. Shall we go on?

Southey. As you heard me patiently when we met before, it is fair and reasonable that I should attend to you, now you have examined more carefully what I recommended to your perusal.* But I do not understand your merriment.

Porson. My merriment is excited now, and was excited on a former occasion, by the fervour of your expression that "Pindar would not have braced a poem to more vigor, nor Euripides have breathed into it more tenderness and passion."

Southey. I spoke of the *Laodamia.*

Porson. Although I gave way to pleasantry instead of arguing the point with you, I had a great deal more to say, Mr Southey, than I said at the first starting of so heavy a runner in his race with Pindar. We will again walk over a part of the ground.

> "With sacrifice before the rising morn
> Performed, my slaughtered lord *have I* '*required,*'
> And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,
> Him of the infernal gods *have I* '*desired.*'"

I only remember, at the time, that the second and fourth verses terminate too much alike. "Desired" may just as well be where "required" is, and "required" where "desired" is: both are wretchedly weak, and both are preceded by the same words, "have I."

Southey. He has corrected[7] them at your suggestion; not

[7 Altered to—

> "With sacrifice before the rising morn
> Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired;
> And from the infernal gods, 'mid shades forlorn
> Of night, my slaughtered lord have I required."]

*[See Appendix.]

indeed much (if any thing) for the better; and he has altered the conclusion, making it more accordant with morality and Christianity, but somewhat less perhaps with Greek manners and sentiments as they existed in the time of the Trojan war.

Porson. Truly, it was far enough from these before. Acknowledge that the fourth line is quite unnecessary, and that the word "performed," in the second, is prosaic.

Southey. I would defend the whole poem.

Porson. To defend the whole, in criticism as in warfare, you must look with peculiar care to the weakest part. In our last conversation, you expressed a wish that I should examine the verses "analytically and severely." Had I done it severely, you would have caught me by the wrist and have intercepted the stroke. Show me, if you can, a single instance of falsity or unfairness in any of these remarks. If you cannot, pray indulge me at least in as much hilarity as my position, between a sick bed and a sorry book, will allow me.

Southey. I must catch the wrist here. The book, as you yourself conceded, comprehends many beautiful things.

Porson. I have said it, I have repeated it, and I will maintain it; but there are more mawkish. This very room has many things of value in it; yet the empty phials are worth nothing, and several of the others are uninviting. Beside yourself, I know scarcely a critic in England sufficiently versed and sufficiently candid to give a correct decision on our poets. All others have their parties; most have their personal friends. On the side opposite to these you find no few morose and darkling, who conjure up the phantom of an enemy in every rising reputation. You are too wise and too virtuous to resemble them. On this cool green bank of literature you stand alone. I always have observed that the herbage is softest and finest in elevated places; and that we may repose with most safety and pleasantness on lofty minds. The little folks who congregate beneath you seem to think of themselves as Pope thought of the women:—

"The *critic* who deliberates is lost."

Southey. Hence random assertions, heats, animosities, missiles of small wit, clouds hiding every object under them, forked lightnings of ill-directed censure, and thunders of applause lost in the

vacuity of space.* I do not find that our critics are fond of suggesting any emendations of the passages they censure in their contemporaries, as you have done in the ancients. Will not you tell me, for the benefit of the author, if there is anything in the *Lyrical Ballads* which you could materially improve?

Porson. Tell me first if you can turn a straw into a walking-stick. When you have done this, I will try what I can do. But I never can do that for Mr Wordsworth which I have sometimes done for his betters. His verses are as he wrote them, and we must leave them as they are; theirs are not so, and faults committed by transcribers or printers may be corrected. In *Macbeth*, for example, we read,—

> "The raven himself is hoarse,
> That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan," &c.

Is there any thing marvellous in a raven being hoarse?—which is implied by the word "himself;" that is to say, *even* the raven, &c. Shakspeare wrote one letter more: "The raven himself is hoarser."

Southey. Surely you could easily correct in the *Lyrical Ballads* faults as obvious.

Porson. If they were as well worth my attention.

Southey. Many are deeply interested by the simple tales they convey in such plain easy language.

Porson. His language is often harsh and dissonant, and his gait is like one whose waistband has been cut behind. There may be something "interesting" in the countenance of the sickly, and even of the dead; but it is only life that can give us enjoyment. Many beside lexicographers place in the same line *simplicity* and *silliness:* they cannot separate them as we can. They think us monsters because we do not see what they see, and because we see plainly what they never can see at all. There is often most love where there is the least acquaintance with the object loved. So it is with these good people who stare at the odd construction of our minds. Homely and poor thoughts may be set off by facility and gracefulness of language; here they often want both.

Southey. Harmonious words render ordinary ideas acceptable; less ordinary, pleasant; novel and ingenious ones, delightful. As pictures and statues, and living beauty too, show better by *music-*

* [See Appendix.]

light, so is poetry irradiated, vivified, glorified, and raised into immortal life by harmony.

Porson. Ay, Mr Southey; and another thing may be noticed. The Muses should be as slow to loosen the zone as the Graces * are. The poetical form like the human, to be beautiful, must be succinct. When we grow corpulent, we are commonly said to *lose our figure*. By this loss of figure we are reduced and weakened. So, there not being bone nor muscle nor blood enough in your client to rectify and support his accretions, he collapses into unswathable flabbiness. We must never disturb him in this condition, which appears to be thought, in certain parts of the country, as much a peculiar mark of Heaven's favor as idiocy is among the Turks. I have usually found his sticklers, like those good folks, dogmatical and dull. One [8] of them lately tried to persuade me that he never is so highly poetical as when he is deeply metaphysical. When I stared, he smiled benignly and said, with a deep sigh that relieved us both, "*Ah! you may be a Grecian!*" He then quoted fourteen German poets of the first order, and expressed his compassion for Æschylus and Homer.

Southey. What a blessing are metaphysics to our generation! A poet or other who can make nothing clear, can stir up enough sediment to render the bottom of a basin as invisible as the deepest gulf in the Atlantic. The shallowest pond, if turbid, has depth enough for a goose to hide its head in.

Porson. I quoted to my instructor in criticism the *Anecdote for Fathers:* he assured me it is as clear as day; not meaning a London day in particular, such as this. But there are sundry gentlemen who, like cats, see clearly in the dark, and far from clearly anywhere else. Hold them where if they were tractable and docile you might show them your objections, and they will swear and claw at you to show how spiteful you are. Others say they wonder that judicious men differ from them. No doubt they differ; and there is but one reason for it, which is because they are so. Again, there are the gentle conciliatory, who say merely that they cannot quite think with you. Have they thought at all? Granting both premises, have they thought or can they think rightly?

* Zonamque segnes solvere Gratiæ.

[8 Probably Coleridge.]

Southey. To suppose the majority can, is to suppose an absurdity; and especially on subjects which require so much preparatory study, such a variety of instruction, such deliberation, delicacy, and refinement. When I have been told, as I often have been, that I shall find very few of my opinion, certainly no compliment was intended me; yet there are few, comparatively, whom Nature has gifted with intuition or exquisite taste; few whose ideas have been drawn, modelled, marked, chiselled, and polished in a *studio* well lighted from above. The opinion of a thousand millions who are ignorant or ill-informed is not equal to the opinion of only one who is wiser. This is too self-evident for argument; yet we hear about the common-sense of mankind! —a common-sense which, unless the people receive it from their betters, leads them only into common error. If such is the case —and we have the testimony of all ages for it—in matters which have most attracted their attention, matters in which their nearest interests are mainly concerned,—in politics, in religion, in the education of their families,—how greatly, how surpassingly must it be in those which require a peculiar structure of understanding, a peculiar endowment of mind, a peculiar susceptibility, and almost an undivided application! In what regards poetry, I should just as soon expect a sound judgment of its essentials from a boatman or a wagoner, as from the usual set of persons we meet in society; persons not uneducated, but deriving their intelligence from little gutters and drains round about. The mud is easily raised to the surface in so shallow a receptacle, and nothing is seen distinctly or clearly. Whereas the humbler man has received no false impressions, and may therefore to a limited extent be right. As for books in general, it is only with men like you that I ever open my lips upon them in conversation. In my capacity of reviewer, dispassionate by temperament, equitable by principle, and moreover for fear of offending God and of suffering in my conscience, I dare not leave behind me in my writings either a false estimate or a frivolous objection.

Porson. Racy wine comes from the high vineyard. There is a spice of the scoundrel in most of our literary men; an itch to filch and detract in the midst of fair-speaking and festivity. This is the reason why I never have much associated with them. There is also another: we have nothing in common but the

alphabet. The most popular of our critics have no heart for poetry; it is morbidly sensitive on one side, and utterly callous on the other. They dandle some little poet, and will never let you take him off their knees; him they feed to bursting with their curds and whey. Another they warn off the premises, and will give him neither a crust nor a crumb until they hear he has succeeded to a large estate in popularity, with plenty of dependants; then they sue and supplicate to be admitted among the number: and lastly, when they hear of his death, they put on mourning, and advertise to raise a monument or a club-room to his memory. You, Mr Southey, will always be considered the soundest and the fairest of our English critics; and, indeed, to the present time you have been the only one of very delicate perception in poetry. But your admirable good-nature has thrown a costly veil over many defects and some deformities. To guide our aspirants, you have given us (and here accept my thanks for them) several good *inscriptions*, much nearer the style of antiquity than any others in our language, and better, indeed much better, than the Italian ones of Chiabrera. I myself have nothing original about me; but here is an inscription which perhaps you will remember in Theocritus,* and translated to the best of my ability:—

Inscription on a Statue of Love.

"Mild he may be, and innocent to view,
Yet who on earth can answer for him? You
Who touch the little god, mind what ye do!

"Say not that none has caution'd you; although
Short be his arrow, slender be his bow,
The King Apollo's never wrought such woe."

This, and one petty skolion, are the only things I have attempted. The skolion is written by Geron:—

"He who in waning age would moralize,
With leaden finger weighs down joyous eyes;
Youths too, with all they say, can only tell
What maids know well:

* Where?

"And yet if they are kind, they hear it out
As patiently as if they clear'd a doubt.
I will not talk like either. Come with me;
Look at the tree!

"Look at the tree while still some leaves are green;
Soon must they fall. Ah! In the space between
Lift those long eyelashes above your book,
For the last look!"

Southey. I cannot recollect them in the Greek.

Porson. Indeed! Perhaps I dreamed it then; for Greek often plays me tricks in my dreams.

Southey. I wish it would play them oftener with our poets. It seems to entertain a peculiar grudge against the most celebrated of them.

Porson. Our conversation has been enlivened and enriched by what seemed sufficiently sterile in its own nature; but, by tossing it about, we have made it useful. Just as certain lands are said to profit by scrapings from the turnpike-road. After this sieving, after this pounding and trituration of the coarser particles, do you really find in Mr Wordsworth such a vigor and variety, such a selection of thoughts and images, as authorize you to rank him with Scott and Burns and Cowper?

Southey. Certainly not; but that is no reason why he should be turned into ridicule on all occasions. Must he be rejected and reviled as a poet because he wishes to be also a philosopher? —or must he be taunted and twitted for weakness because by his nature he is quiescent?

Porson. No, indeed; though much of this quiescency induces debility, and is always a sign of it in poetry. Let poets enjoy their sleep; but let them not impart it, nor take it amiss if they are shaken by the shoulder for the attempt. I reprehended at our last meeting, as severely as you yourself did, those mischievous children who played their pranks with him in his easy-chair; and I drove away from him those old women who brought him their drastics from the Edinburgh Dispensary. Poor souls! they are all swept off. Sydney Smith, the wittiest man alive, could not keep them up, by administering a nettle and a shove to this unsaved remnant of the Baxter Christians.

Southey. The heaviest of them will kick at you the most

viciously. Castigation is not undue to him, for he has snipped off as much as he could pinch from every author of reputation in his time. It is less ungenerous to expose such people than to defend them.

Porson. Let him gird up his loins, however, and be gone; we will turn where correction ought to be milder, and may be more efficient. Give a trifle of strength and austerity to the squashiness of our friend's poetry, and reduce in almost every piece its quantity to half. Evaporation will render it likelier to keep. Without this process, you will shortly have it only in the form of extracts. You talk of philosophy in poetry, and in poetry let it exist; but let its veins run through a poem as our veins run through the body, and never be too apparent; for the prominence of veins, in both alike, is a symptom of weakness, feverishness, and senility. On the ground where we are now standing, you have taken one end of the blanket and I the other; but it is I chiefly who have shaken the dust out. Nobody can pass us without seeing it rise against the sunlight, and observing what a heavy cloud there is of it. While it lay quietly in the flannel, it lay without suspicion.

Southey. Let us return, if you please, to one among the partakers of your praise, whose philosophy is neither obtrusive nor abstruse. I am highly gratified by your commendation of Cowper, than whom there never was a more virtuous or more amiable man. In some passages, he stands quite unrivalled by any recent poet of this century: none, indeed, modern or ancient, has touched the heart more delicately, purely, and effectively, than he has done in *Crazy Kate*, in Lines on his *Mother's Picture*, in *Omai*, and on hearing *Bells at a Distance*.

Porson. Thank you for the mention of bells. Mr Wordsworth, I remember, speaks in an authoritative and scornful tone of censure on Cowper's "church-going" bell, treating the expression as a gross impropriety and absurdity.[9] True enough, the *church-going* bell does not go to church any more than I do; neither does the *passing* bell pass any more than I; nor does the

[9 "The epithet 'Church-going' applied to a bell, and that by so chaste a writer as Cowper, is an instance of the strange abuses which Poets have introduced into their language, &c." "Introduction to the *Excursion*."]

curfew bell cover any more fire than is contained in Mr Wordsworth's poetry: but the church-going bell is that which is rung for people going to church; the passing-bell, for those passing to heaven; the curfew-bell, for the burgesses and villagers to cover their fires. He would not allow me to be called *well-spoken*, nor you to be called *well-read*; and yet, by this expression, I should mean to signify that you have read much, and I should employ another in signifying that you have been much read. Incomparably better is Cowper's *Winter* than Virgil's, which is indeed a disgrace to the Georgics; or than Thomson's, which in places is grand. But would you on the whole compare Cowper with Dryden?

Southey. Dryden possesses a much richer store of thoughts, expatiates upon more topics, has more vigor, vivacity, and animation. He is always shrewd and penetrating, explicit and perspicuous, concise where conciseness is desirable, and copious where copiousness can yield delight. When he aims at what is highest in poetry, the dramatic, he falls below his *Fables*. However, I would not compare the poetical power of Cowper with his; nor would I, as some have done, pit Young against him. Young is too often fantastical and frivolous: he pins butterflies to the pulpit-cushion; he suspends against the grating of the charnel-house colored lamps and comic transparencies,—Cupid, and the cat and the fiddle; he opens a store-house filled with minute particles of heterogeneous wisdom and unpalatable gobbets of ill-concocted learning, contributions from the classics, from the schoolmen, from homilies, and from farces. What you expect to be an elegy turns out an epigram; and when you think he is bursting into tears, he laughs in your face. Do you go with him into his closet, prepared for an admonition or a rebuke, he shakes his head, and you sneeze at the powder and perfumery of his peruke. Wonder not if I prefer to his pungent essences the incense which Cowper burns before the altar.

Porson. Young was, in every sense of the word, an ambitious man. He had strength, but wasted it. Blair's *Grave* has more spirit in it than the same portion of the *Night Thoughts*: but never was poetry so ill put together; never was there so good a poem, of the same extent, from which so great a quantity of what is mere trash might be rejected. The worst blemish in it is the

ridicule and scoffs cast not only on the violent and grasping, but equally on the gentle, the beautiful, the studious, the eloquent, and the manly. It is ugly enough to be carried quietly to the grave; it is uglier to be hissed and hooted into it. Even the quiet astronomer,

> "With study pale, and midnight vigils spent,"

is not permitted to depart in peace, but (of all men in the world!) is called a "proud man," and is coolly and flippantly told that

> "Great heights are hazardous to the weak head;"

which the poet might have turned into a verse, if he had tried again, as we will:—

> "To the weak head, great heights are hazardous."

In the same funny style, he writes,—

> "Oh that some courteous ghost would blab it out,
> What 'tis they are."

Courtesy and blabbing, in this upper world of ours, are thought to be irreconcilable; but blabbing may not be indecorous nor derogatory to the character of courtesy in a ghost. However, the expression is an uncouth one; and when we find it so employed, we suspect the ghost cannot have been keeping good company, but, as the king said to the miller of Mansfield, that his "courtesy is but small." Cowper plays in the play-ground, and not in the churchyard. Nothing of his is out of place or out of season. He possessed a rich vein of ridicule; but he turned it to good account, opening it on prig parsons, and graver and worse impostors. He was among the first who put to flight the mischievous little imps of allegory, so cherished and fondled by the Wartons. They are as bad in poetry as mice in a cheese-room. You poets are still rather too fond of the unsubstantial. Some will have nothing else than what they call pure imagination. Now air-plants ought not to fill the whole conservatory; other plants, I would modestly suggest, are worth cultivating, which send their roots pretty deep into the ground. I hate both poetry and wine without body. Look at Shakspeare, Bacon, and

Milton; were these your pure imagination men? The least of them, whichever it was, carried a jewel of poetry about him worth all his tribe that came after. Did the two of them who wrote in verse build upon nothing? Did their predecessors? And, pray, whose daughter was the Muse they invoked? Why, Memory's. They stood among substantial men, and sang upon recorded actions. The plain of Scamander, the promontory of Sigæum, the palaces of Tros and Dardanus, the citadel in which the Fates sang mournfully under the image of Minerva, seem fitter places for the Muses to alight on, than artificial rockwork or than fairy rings. But your great favorite, I hear, is Spenser, who shines in allegory, and who, like an aerolite is dull and heavy when he descends to the ground.

Southey. He continues a great favorite with me still, although he must always lose a little as our youth declines. Spenser's is a spacious but somewhat low chamber, hung with rich tapestry on which the figures are mostly disproportioned, but some of the faces are lively and beautiful; the furniture is part creaking and worm-eaten, part fragrant with cedar and sandal-wood and aromatic gums and balsams; every table and mantelpiece and cabinet is covered with gorgeous vases, and birds, and dragons, and houses in the air.

Porson. There is scarcely a poet of the same eminence, whom I have found it so delightful to read in, or so tedious to read through. Give me Chaucer in preference. He slaps us on the shoulder, and makes us spring up while the dew is on the grass, and while the long shadows play about it in all quarters. We feel strong with the freshness round us, and we return with a keener appetite, having such a companion in our walk. Among the English poets, both on this side and the other side of Milton, I place him next to Shakspeare; but the word *next* must have nothing to do with the word *near*. I said before, that I do not estimate so highly as many do the mushrooms that sprang up in a ring under the great oak of Arden.

Southey. These authors deal in strong distillations for foggy minds that want excitement. In few places is there a great depth of sentiment, but everywhere vast exaggeration and insane display. I find the over-crammed curiosity-shop, with its incommodious appendages, some grotesquely rich, all disorderly and

disconnected. Rather would I find, as you would, the well-proportioned hall, with its pillars of right dimensions at right distances; with its figures, some in high relief and some in lower; with its statues and its busts of glorious men and women, whom I recognise at first sight; and its tables of the rarest marbles and richest gems, inlaid in glowing porphyry, and supported by imperishable bronze. Without a pure simplicity of design, without a just subordination of characters, without a select choice of such personages as either have interested us or must by the power of association, without appropriate ornaments laid on solid materials,—no admirable poetry of the first order can exist.

Porson. Well, we cannot get all these things, and we will not cry for them. Leave me rather in the curiosity-shop than in the nursery. By your reference to the noble models of antiquity, it is evident that those poets most value the ancients who are certain to be among them. In our own earlier poets, as in the earlier Italian painters, we find many disproportions; but we discern the dawn of truth over the depths of expression. These were soon lost sight of, and every new-comer passed further from them. I like Pietro Perugino a thousand-fold better than Carlo Maratta, and Giotto a thousand-fold better than Carlo Dolce. On the same principle, the day-break of Chaucer is pleasanter to me than the hot dazzling noon of Byron.

Southey. I am not confident that we ever speak quite correctly of those who differ from us essentially in taste, in opinion, or even in style. If we cordially wish to do it, we are apt to lay a restraint on ourselves, and to dissemble a part of our convictions.

Porson. An error seldom committed.

Southey. Sometimes, however. I, for example, did not expose in my criticisms half the blemishes I discovered in the style and structure of Byron's poetry, because I had infinitely more to object against the morals it disseminated; and what must have been acknowledged for earnestness in the greater question might have been mistaken for captiousness in the less. His partisans, no one of whom probably ever read Chaucer, would be indignant at your preference. They would wonder, but hardly with the same violence of emotion, that he was preferred to Shakspeare. Perhaps his countrymen in his own age, which rarely happens to

literary men overshadowingly great, had glimpses of his merit. One would naturally think that a personage of Camden's gravity, and placed beyond the pale of poetry, might have spoken less contemptuously of some he lived among, in his admiration of Chaucer. He tells us both in prose and verse, by implication, how little he esteemed Shakspeare. Speaking of Chaucer, he says, "He,[10] surpassing all others, without question, in wit, and leaving our smattering poetasters by many leagues behind him,

"'Jam monte potitus
Ridet anhelantem dura ad fastigia turbam.'"

Which he thus translates for the benefit of us students in poetry and criticism:—

"When once himself the steep top-hill had won,
At all the sort of them he laughed anon,
To see how they, the pitch thereof to gain,
Puffing and blowing to climbe up in vain."

Nevertheless we are indebted to Camden for preserving the best Latin verses, and indeed the only good ones, that had hitherto been written by any of our countrymen. They were written in an age when great minds were attracted by greater, and when tribute was paid where tribute was due, with loyalty and enthusiasm.

"Drace! pererrati novit quem terminus orbis
Quemque simul mundi vidit uterque polus.
Si taceant homines, facient te sidera notum;
Sol nescit comitis immemor esse sui."

Porson. A subaltern in the supplementary company of the Edinburgh sharpshooters much prefers the slender Italians, who fill their wallets with scraps from the doors of rich old houses. To compare them in rank and substance with those on whose bounty they feed is too silly for grave reprehension. But there are certain men who are driven by necessity to exhibit some sore absurdity: it is their only chance of obtaining a night's lodging in the memory.

Southey. Send the Ishmaelite back again to his desert: he has indeed no right to complain of you; for there are scarcely

[10 See Camden's "Britannia under Oxfordshire and Devonshire."]

two men of letters at whom he has not cast a stone, although he met them far beyond the tents and the pasturage of his tribe: and leave those poets also, and return to consider attentively the one, much more original, on whom we began our discourse.

Porson. Thank you. I have lain in ditches ere now; but not willingly, nor to contemplate the moon, nor to gather celandine. I am reluctant to carry a lantern in quest of my man, and am but little contented to be told that I may find him at last, if I look long enough and far enough. One who exhibits no sign of life in the duration of a single poem may at once be given up to the undertaker.

Southey. It would be fairer in you to regard the aim and object of the poet when he tells you what it is, than to linger in those places where he appears to disadvantage.

Porson. My oil and vinegar are worth more than the winter cabbage you have set before me, and are ill-spent upon it. In what volume of periodical criticism do you not find it stated that, the aim of an author being such or such, the only question is whether he has attained it? Now, instead of this being the only question to be solved, it is pretty nearly the one least worthy of attention. We are not to consider whether a foolish man has succeeded in a foolish undertaking: we are to consider whether his production is worth anything, and why it is, or why it is not? Your cook, it appears, is disposed to fry me a pancake; but it is not his intention to supply me with lemon-juice and sugar. Pastiness and flatness are the qualities of a pancake, and thus far he has attained his aim; but if he means it for me, let him place the accessories on the table, lest what is insipid and clammy and (as housewives with great propriety call it) sad grow into duller accretion and inerter viscidity the more I masticate it. My good Mr Southey, do not be offended at these homely similes. Socrates uses no other in the pages of the stately Plato; they are all, or nearly all, borrowed from the artisan and the trader. I have plenty of every sort at hand, but I always take the most applicable, quite indifferent to the smartness and glossiness of its trim. If you prefer one from another quarter, I would ask where is the advantage of drilling words for verses, when the knees of those verses are so weak that they cannot march from the parade?

Southey. Flatnesses are more apparent to us in our language

than in another, especially than in Latin and Greek. Beside, we value things proportionally to the trouble they have given us in the acquisition. Hence, in some measure, the importance we assign to German poetry. The meaning of every word, with all its affinities and relations, pursued with anxiety and caught with difficulty, impresses the understanding, sinks deep into the memory, and carries with it more than a column of our own, in which equal thought is expended, and equal fancy is displayed. The Germans have among them many admirable poets; but if we had even greater, ours would seem smaller, both because there is less haziness about them, and because, as I said before, they would have given less exercise to the mind. He who has accumulated by a laborious life more than a sufficiency for its wants and comforts turns his attention to the matter gained, oftentimes without a speculation at the purposes to which he might apply it. The man who early in the day has overcome, by vigilance and restraint, the strong impulses of his blood toward intemperance falls not into it after, but stands composed and complacent upon the cool clear eminence, and hears within himself, amid the calm he has created, the tuneful pæan of a godlike victory. Yet he loves the Virtue more because he fought for her than because she crowned him. The scholar who has deducted from adolescence many hours of recreation, and, instead of indulging in it, has embarked in the depths of literature; he who has left all his own land far behind him, and has carried off rich stores of Greek,—not only values it superlatively, as is just, but places all those who wrote in it too nearly on a level one with another, and the inferior of them above some of the best moderns.

Porson. Dignity of thought arose from the Athenian form of government, propriety of expression from the genius of the language, from the habitude of listening daily to the most elaborate orations and dramas, and of contemplating at all hours the exquisite works of art, invited to them by gods and heroes. These environed the aspiring young poet, and their chasteness allowed him no swerving.

Southey. Yet weakly children were born to Genius in Attica as elsewhere.

Porson. They were exposed and died. The Greek poets, like nightingales, sing "in shadiest covert hid;" you rarely catch

a glimpse of the person unless at a funeral or a feast, or where the occasion is public. Mr Wordsworth, on the contrary, strokes down his waistcoat, hems gently first, then hoarsely, then impatiently, rapidly, and loudly. You turn your eyes, and see more of the showman than of the show. I do not complain of this; I only make the remark.

Southey. I dislike such comparisons and similes. It would have been better had you said he stands forth in sharp outline, and is, as the moon was said to be, without an atmosphere.

Porson. Stop there. I discover more atmosphere than moon. You are talking like a poet; I must talk like a grammarian. And here I am reminded I found in his grammar but one pronoun, and that is the pronoun *I*. He can devise no grand character, and indeed no variety of smaller: his own image is reflected from floor to roof in every crystallization of the chilly cavern. He shakes us with no thunder of anger; he leads us into no labyrinth of love; we lament on the stormy shore no Lycidas of his; and even the Phillis who meets us at her cottage-gate is not Phillis the neat-handed. Byron has likewise been censured for egoism, and the censure is applicable to him nearly in the same degree. But so laughable a story was never told of Byron as the true and characteristical one related of your neighbor; who, being invited to read in company a novel of Scott's, and finding at the commencement a quotation from himself, totally forgot the novel, and recited his own poem from beginning to end, with many comments and more commendations. Yours are quite gratuitous; for it is reported of him that he never was heard to commend the poetry of any living author.

Southey. Because he is preparing to discharge the weighty debt he owes posterity. Instead of wasting his breath on extraneous praises, we never have been seated five minutes in his company before he regales us with those poems of his own, which he is the most apprehensive may have slipped from our memory; and he delivers them with such a summer murmur of fostering modulation as would perfectly delight you.

Porson. My horse is apt to shy when I hang him at any door where he catches the sound of a ballad; and I run out to seize bridle and mane, and grow the alerter at mounting.

Southey. Wordsworth has now turned from the ballad style to the philosophical.

Porson. The philosophical, I suspect, is antagonist to the poetical.

Southey. Surely never was there a spirit more philosophical than Shakspeare's.

Porson. True, but Shakspeare infused it into living forms adapted to its reception. He did not puff it out incessantly from his own person, bewildering you in the mazes of metaphysics, and swamping you in sententiousness. After all our argumentation, we merely estimate poets by their energy, and not extol them for a congeries of piece on piece, sounding of the hammer all day long, but obstinately unmalleable into unity and cohesion.

Southey. I cannot well gainsay it. But pray remember the subjects of that poetry in Burns and Scott, which you admire the most. What is martial must be the most soul-stirring.

Porson. Sure enough, Mr Wordsworth's is neither martial nor mercurial. On all subjects of poetry, the soul should be agitated in one way or other. Now did he ever excite in you any strong emotion? He has had the best chance with me; for I have soon given way to him, and he has sung me asleep with his lullabies. It is in our dreams that things look brightest and fairest, and we have the least control over our affections.

Southey. You cannot but acknowledge that the poetry which is strong enough to support, as his does, a wide and high superstructure of morality is truly beneficial and admirable. I do not say that utility is the first aim of poetry: but I do say that good poetry is none the worse for being useful; and that his is good in many parts, and useful in nearly all.

Porson. An old woman who rocks a cradle in a chimney-corner may be more useful than the joyous girl who wafts my heart before her in the waltz, or holds it quivering in the bonds of harmony; but I happen to have no relish for the old woman, and am ready to dip my fork into the little well-garnished *agro dolce*. It is inhuman to quarrel with ladies and gentlemen who are easily contented; that is, if you will let them have their own way. It is inhuman to snatch a childish book from a child, for whom it is better than a wise one. If diffuseness is pardonable anywhere, we will pardon it in *Lyrical Ballads*, passing over the conceited silliness of the denomination; but Mr Wordsworth has got into the same habit on whatever he writes. Whortleberries

are neither the better nor the worse for extending the hard slenderness of their fibres, at random and riotingly, over their native wastes; we care not how much of such soil is covered with such insipidities: but we value that fruit more highly which requires some warmth to swell, and some science and skill to cultivate it. To descend from metaphor, that is the best poetry which, by its own powers, produces the greatest and most durable emotion on generous, well-informed, and elevated minds. It often happens that what belongs to the subject is attributed to the poet. Tenderness, melancholy, and other affections of the soul attract us toward him who represents them to us; and, while we hang upon his neck, we are ready to think him stronger than he is. No doubt, it is very natural that the wings of the Muse should seem to grow larger the nearer they come to the ground! Such is the effect, I presume, of our English atmosphere! But if Mr Wordsworth should at any time become very popular, it will be owing in great measure to your authority and patronage; and I hope that, neither in health nor in sickness, he will forget his benefactor.

Southey. However that may be, it would be unbecoming and base in me to suppress an act of justice toward him, withholding my testimony in his behalf when he appeals to the tribunal of the public. The reader who can discover no good, or indeed no excellent, poetry in his manifold productions must have lost the finer part of his senses.

Porson. And he who fancies he has found it in all or in most of them is just as happy as if his senses were entire. A great portion of his compositions is not poetry, but only the plasma or matrix of poetry, which has something of the same color and material, but wants the brilliancy and solidity.

Southey. Acknowledge, at least, that what purifies the mind elevates it also; and that he does it.

Porson. Such a result may be effected at a small expenditure of the poetical faculty, and indeed without any. But I do not say that he has none, or that he has little: I only say, and I stake my credit on it, that what he has is not of the higher order. This is proved beyond all controversy by the effect it produces. The effect of the higher poetry is excitement; the effect of the inferior is composure. I lay down a general principle, and I

leave to others the application of it, to-day, to-morrow, and in time to come. Little would it benefit me or you to take a side; and still less to let the inanimate raise animosity in us. There are partisans in favor of a poet, and oppositionists against him, just as there are in regard to candidates for a seat in Parliament; and the vociferations of the critics and of the populace are equally loud, equally inconsiderate and insane. The unknown candidate and the unread poet has alike a mob at his heels, ready to swear and fight for him. The generosity which the political mob shows in one instance, the critical mob shows in the other: when a man has been fairly knocked down, it raises him on the knee, and cheers him as cordially as it would the most triumphant. Let similar scenes be rather our amusement than our business; let us wave our hats, and walk on without a *favor* in them.

Southey. Be it our business, and not for one day, but for life, "to raise up them that fall" by undue violence. The beauties of Wordsworth are not to be looked for among the majestic ruins and under the glowing skies of Greece: we must find them out, like primroses, amid dry thickets, rank grass, and withered leaves. But there they are; and there are tufts and clusters of them. There may be a chilliness in the air about them, there may be a faintness, a sickliness, a poverty in the scent; but I am sorry and indignant to see them trampled on.

Porson. He who tramples on rocks is in danger of breaking his shins; and he who tramples on sand or sawdust loses his labor. Between us, we may keep up Mr Wordsworth in his right position. If we set any thing on an uneven basis, it is liable to fall off, and none the less liable for the thing being high and weighty.

Southey. The axiom is sound.

Porson. Cleave it in two, and present the first half to Mr Wordsworth. Let every man have his due: divide the mess fairly; not according to the voracity of the laborer, but according to the work. And (God love you!) never let old women poke me with their knitting-pins, if I recommend them, in consideration of their hobbling and wheezing, to creep quietly on by the level side of Mr Wordsworth's lead-mines, slate-quarries, and tarns, leaving me to scramble as I can among the Alpine inequalities of Milton and of Shakspeare. Come now; in all the

time we have been walking together at the side of the lean herd you are driving to market,

"Can you make it appear
The dog Porson has ta'en the wrong sow by the ear?"

Southey. It is easier to show that he has bitten it through, and made it unfit for curing. He may expect to be pelted for it.

Porson. In cutting up a honeycomb, we are sure to bring flies and wasps about us; but my slipper is enough to crush fifty at a time, if a flap of the glove fails to frighten them off. The honeycomb must be cut up, to separate the palatable from the unpalatable; the hive we will restore to the cottager; the honey we will put in a cool place for those it may agree with; and the wax we will attempt to purify, rendering it the material of a clear and steady light to our readers. Well! I have rinsed my mouth of the poetry. This is about the time I take my ptisan. Be so kind, Mr Southey, as to give me that bottle which you will find under the bed. Yes, yes; that is it; there is no mistake.

Southey. It smells like brandy.

Porson (*drinks twice*). I suspect you may be in the right, Mr Southey. Let me try it against the palate once more: just one small half-glass. Ah! my hand shakes sadly. I am afraid it was a bumper. Really now, I do think, Mr Southey, you guessed the right reading. I have scarcely a doubt left upon my mind. But in a fever, or barely off it, the mouth is wofully out of taste. If ever your hand shakes, take my word for it, this is the only remedy. The ptisan has done me good already. Albertus Magnus knew most about these matters. I hate the houses, Mr Southey, where it is as easy to find the way out as the way in. Curse upon the architect who contrives them!

Southey. Your friends will be happy to hear from me that you never have been in better spirits, or more vivacious and prompt in conversation.

Porson. Tell them that Silenus can still bridle and mount an ass, and guide him gloriously. Come and visit me when I am well again; and I promise you the bottles shall diminish and the lights increase before we part.

[The origin of the attack on Byron contained in this Conversation was the warfare between Southey and Byron, carried on in their respective

Visions of Judgment. In his preface, Southey quoted from a Latin essay of Landor's "De Cultu atque usu Latini Sermonis," a passage intended to point his charge against Byron of being the leader of a school of poetry which was treasonable, blasphemous, and obscene. Byron, in his reply, after reminding Southey of the existence of Wat Tyler, falls upon Landor in a note. "Mr Southey laudeth grievously one Mr Landor, who cultivates much private renown in the shape of Latin verses." He goes on to point out that in Gebir (iii. 131), Landor consigned to eternal perdition the very king whom Southey exalted to Paradise. Moreover, "I omit," he says, "noticing some edifying Ithyphallics of Savagius, wishing to keep the proper veil over them, if his grave but somewhat indiscreet worshipper will suffer it; but certainly these teachers of great moral lessons are apt to be found in strange company." A note in "The Island," Canto II., xvii., repeats the attack in slightly different words; the declaration in this passage that he had never read Gebir, from which he avowedly copied the well-known passage concerning the Sea-shell, perhaps points to another cause for Byron's anger with Landor. Landor had been reported to have said that he *would* not or *could* not read Lord Byron's works, and Byron had resolved upon attacking him. A wittier criticism is that contained in the two lines from Don Juan, Canto XI., 59, "And that deep-mouthed Boeotian Savage Landor, Has taken for a swan Dan Southey's gander." In this Conversation Landor has contrived to pay Southey a royal compliment, and to repay Byron for his attacks on himself and his friend. (Vol. i., 1824. Vol. i., 1826. Works, i., 1846. Works, iv., 1876.)]

III. BISHOP BURNET AND HUMPHREY HARDCASTLE.

Hardcastle. I am curious, my lord bishop, to hear somewhat about the flight and escape of my namesake and uncle, Sir Humphrey Hardcastle; who was a free-spoken man, witty, choleric, and hospitable, and who cannot have been altogether an alien from the researches of your lordship into the history of the two late reigns.

Burnet. Why, Mr Hardcastle, I do well remember the story of that knight, albeit his manners and morals were such as did entertain me little in his favor. For he hunted and drank and fornicated, and (some do aver) swore, which, however, mark me, I do not deliver from my own knowledge, nor from any written and grave document. I the more wonder at him, since he had

lived among the Roundheads, as they were contemptuously called; and the minister of his parish was Ezekiel Stedman, a Puritan of no ill-repute. Howbeit he was ensnared by his worldly-mindedness, and fell into evil courses. The Lord, who permitted him a long while to wallow in this mire, caught him by the heel, so to say, as he was coming out, and threw him into great peril in another way. For although he had mended his life, and had espoused Margaret Pouncey, whose mother was a Touchet,—two staid women,—yet did he truly in a boozing-bout, such as some country gentlemen I could mention do hold after dinner, say of the duke, "James,—a murrain on him!—is a Papist."

Now among his servants was one Will Taunton, a sallow, shining-faced knave, sweaty with impudence. I do remember to have seen the said Taunton in the pillory, for some prominent part he had enacted under the doctor, Titus Oates; and a country wench, as I suppose her to have been from her apparel and speech, said unto me, plucking my sleeve, "Look, parson, Will's forehead is like a rank mushroom in a rainy morning; and yet, I warrant you, they show it forsooth as the cleanest and honestest part about him."

To continue: Will went straightway and communicated the words of his master to Nicolas Shottery, the duke's valet. Nick gave unto him a shilling, having first spatten thereon, as he (according to his superstition) said, for luck. The duke ordered to be counted out unto him eight shillings more, together with a rosary, the which, as he was afraid of wearing it (for he had not lost all grace), he sold at Richmond for two groats. He was missed in the family, and his roguery was scented. On which, nothing was foolisher, improperer, or unreasonabler than the desperate push and strain Charles made, put upon it by his brother James, to catch your uncle Hum Hardcastle. Hum had his eye upon him, slipped the noose, and was over into the Low Countries.

Abraham Cowley, one of your Pindaric lyrists, a great stickler for the measures of the First Charles, was posted after him. But he played the said Abraham a scurvy trick; seizing him by his fine flowing curls, on which he prided himself mightily, like another Absalom; cuffing him, and, some do say, kicking him, in such dishonest wise as I care not to mention, to his, the said

Abraham's, great incommodity and confusion. It is agreed on all hands that he handled him very roughly, sending him back to his master with a flea in his ear, who gave him but cold comfort, and told him it would be an ill compliment to ask him to be seated.

"Phil White," he added, "may serve you, Cowley. You need not look back, man, nor spread your fingers like a fig-leaf on the place. Phil does not, like Dan Holroyd of Harwick, carry a bottle of peppered brine in his pocket; he is a clever, apposite, upright little prig. I have often had him under my eye close enough, and I promise he may safely be trusted on the blind side of you."

Then, after these aggravating and childish words, turning to the duke, as Abraham was leaving the presence, he is reported to have said, I hope untruly: "But, damn it, brother! the jest would have been heightened if we could have hanged the knave," meaning not indeed his messenger, but the above-cited Hum Hardcastle. And on James shaking his head, sighing, and muttering his doubt of the king's sincerity, and his vexation at so bitter a disappointment, "Oddsfish! Jim," said his Majesty, "the motion was Hum's own! I gave him no jog, upon my credit! His own choler did it, a rogue! and he would not have waited to be invested with the order, if I had pressed him ever so civilly. I will oblige you another time in any thing, but we can hang only those we can get at."

It would appear that there was a sore and rankling grudge between them of long standing, and that there had been divers flings and flouts backward and forward, on this side the water, on the score of their mistress, Poesy; whose favors to them both, if a man may judge from the upshot, left no such a mighty matter for heart-burnings and ill blood.

This reception had such a stress and stir upon the bile and spirits of Dr Spratt's friend (for such he was, even while writing about his mistresses), that he wooed his Pegasus another way, and rid gentlier. It fairly untuned him for Chloes and fantastical things of all sorts, set him upon another guess scent, gave him ever afterward a soberer and staider demeanor, and turned his mind to contentment.

Hardcastle. The pleasure I have taken in the narration of

your lordship is for the greater part independent of what concerns my family. We [2] have only a few songs of our uncle; and these too would have been lost, if the old coachman had not taught them to his grandson, still in my service. They are such as I forbid him to sing in our house, but connive at him doing it when he is in others'; particularly at the inns, where they always obtain me the best wine and most gladsome attendance. In fact, I have ever found that, when my horses came out of a stable where he had been singing, they neighed the louder, and trotted the faster, and made a prouder display of their oats.

Burnet. I remember one of them, from its being more reasonable than the invocations of a lover usually are. Either they talk of tears, which they ought to be ashamed of as men and Christians, or of death, when the doctor has told them no such thing; or they run wild among the worst imps and devils of the Gentiles, for in truth they are no better, whatever forms they assumed,—Nymphs or Graces or what not.

Hardcastle. Pray, my lord bishop, if there is no impropriety in asking it, might I request a copy of those verses?

Burnet. Truly, sir, I keep none of such a girl's-eye sampler. I will attempt to recollect the words, which, I own it, pleased me by their manfulness, as demonstrating that your Uncle Hum, though a loosish man and slippery in foul proclivities, was stout and resolute with the sluts in his wiser moments, calling them what they ought to be called at the first word.

> "Listen, mad girl! since giving ear
> May save the eyes hard work:
> Tender is he who holds you dear,
> But proud as pope or Turk."

Now Hum hated paganism and iniquity; and nothing could stir him from his church, though he attended it but seldom. He proceeds thus:—

> "Some have been seen, whom people thought
> Much prettier girls than you,"—

Observe, he will be reasonable, and bring the creature to her senses if he can:—

> "Setting a lover's tears at nought,
> Like any other dew;

[2] From "We" to "but" (59 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

"And some too have been heard to swear,
While with wet lids they stood,
No man alive was worth a tear:
They never wept—nor wou'd."

Resolute! ay! False creatures; he sounded them, even the deepest. There is something about these wantons black as hell, and they cannot help showing it.

Hardcastle. I thank your lordship, as much for your reflections as for my uncle's poetry.

Burnet. I wish he had left behind him the experience he must have paid dear for, that it might serve to admonish the sprigs and sparks (as they are called) of our unhappy times, and purify the pestilence they are breathing. Formerly, we know from Holy Writ, the devils ran out of men into swine, and pushed down in those fit bodies to the sea. It now appears that they were still snifting and hankering after their old quarters; and we find them rushing again into men, only the stronger and hungrier, the ungovernabler and uncleanlier, for so much salt-water bathing.

Hardcastle. I am afraid, my lord bishop, you have too much reason for this severe remark. My uncle, I knew, was somewhat of a libertine; but I never had heard before that he was such a poet, and could hardly have imagined that he approached near enough to Mr Cowley for jealousy or competition.

Burnet. Indeed, they who discoursed on such matters were of the same opinion, excepting some few, who see nothing before them and every thing behind. These declared that Hum would overtop Abraham, if he could only drink rather less, think rather more, and feel rather rightlier; that he had great spunk and spirit, and that not a fan was left upon a lap when any one sang his airs. Lucretius[3] tells us that there is a plant on Helicon so pestiferous that it kills by the odour of its flowers. It appears that these flowers are now collected by our young women for their sweet-pots, and that the plant itself is naturalized among us, and blossoming in every parlor window. Poets, like ministers of state, have their parties, and it is difficult to get at truth upon questions not capable of demonstration nor founded on matter of fact. To take any trouble about them is an unwise thing. It is

[3 From "Lucretius" to "window" (5 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

like mounting a wall covered with broken glass: you cut your fingers before you reach the top, and you only discover at last that it is, within a span or two, of equal height on both sides. To[4] sit as an arbitrator between two contending poets, I should consider just as foolish as to take the same position and office between two game-cocks, if it were at the same time as wicked. I say as wicked; for I am firmly of opinion that those things are the foolishest which are the most immoral. The greatest of stakes, mundanely speaking, is the stake of reputation: hence he who hazards the most of it against a viler object is the most irrational and insane. I do not understand rightly in what the greatness of your poets, and such like, may be certified to rest. Who would have imagined that the youth who was carried to his long home the other day—I mean my Lord Rochester's reputed child, Mr George Nelly—was for several seasons a great poet? Yet I remember the time when he was so famous a one that he ran after Mr Milton up Snow-hill, as the old gentleman was leaning on his daughter's arm from the Poultry, and, treading down the heel of his shoe, called him a rogue and a liar; while another poet sprang out, clapping his hands and crying, "Bravely done, by Beelzebub! the young cock spurs the blind buzzard gallantly!" On a scrivener representing to Mr George the respectable character of Mr Milton, and the probability that at some future time he might be considered as among our geniuses, and such as would reflect a certain portion of credit on his ward, and asking him withal why he appeared to him a rogue and a liar, he replied, "I have proofs known to few: I possess a sort of drama by him, entitled *Comus*, which was composed for the entertainment of Lord Pembroke, who held an appointment under the king; and this John hath since changed sides, and written in defence of the Commonwealth."

Mr George began with satirizing his father's friends, and confounding the better part of them with all the hirelings and nuisances of the age; with all the scavengers of lust, and all the link-boys of literature; with Newgate solicitors, the patrons of adulterers and forgers, who, in the long vacation, turn a penny by puffing a ballad, and are promised a shilling in silver for their own benefit, on crying down a religious tract. He soon became re-

[4 From "To" to "rest" (9 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

conciled to them, and they raised him upon their shoulders above the heads of the wittiest and the wisest. This served a whole winter. Afterward, whenever he wrote a bad poem, he supported his sinking fame by some signal act of profligacy: an elegy by a seduction, a heroic by an adultery, a tragedy by a divorce. On the remark of a learned man, that irregularity is no indication of genius, he began to lose ground rapidly, when on a sudden he cried out at the Haymarket, *There is no God!* It was then surmised more generally and more gravely that there was something in him, and he stood upon his legs almost to the last. Say what you will, once whispered a friend of mine, there are things in him strong as poison and original as sin. Doubts, however, were entertained by some, on more mature reflection, whether he earned his reputation by his aphorism; for soon afterward he declared at the Cockpit that he had purchased a large assortment of cutlasses and pistols, and that, as he was practising the use of them from morning to night, it would be imprudent in persons who were without them either to laugh or to boggle at the Dutch vocabulary with which he had enriched our language. In fact, he had invented new rhymes in profusion, by such words as trackschuyt, Wageninghen, Skiermonikoog, Bergen-op-Zoom, and whatever is appertaining to the market-places of fish, flesh, fowl, flowers, and legumes, not to omit the dockyards and barracks and ginshops, with various kinds of essences and drugs.

Now, Mr Hardcastle, I would not censure this: the idea is novel, and does no harm; but why should a man push his neck into a halter to sustain a catch or glee?

Having had some concern in bringing his reputed father to a sense of penitence for his offences, I waited on the youth likewise in a former illness, not without hope of leading him ultimately to a better way of thinking. I had hesitated too long: I found him far advanced in his convalescence. My arguments are not worth repeating. He replied thus: "I change my mistresses as Tom Southern his shirt, from economy. I cannot afford to keep few; and I am determined not to be forgotten till I am vastly richer. But I assure you, Dr Burnet, for your comfort, that if you imagine I am led astray by lasciviousness, as you call it, and lust, you are quite as much mistaken as if you called a book of arithmetic a bawdy book. I calculate on every kiss I give, modest or im-

modest, on lip or paper. I ask myself one question only: What will it bring me?" On my marvelling and raising up my hands, "You churchmen," he added with a laugh, "are too hot in all your quarters for the calm and steady contemplation of this high mystery."

He spake thus loosely, Mr Hardcastle, and I confess I was disconcerted and took my leave of him. If I gave him any offence at all, it could only be when he said, "I should be sorry to die before I had written my life;" and I replied, "Rather say, before you have mended it."

"But, doctor," continued he, "the work I propose may bring me a hundred pounds." Whereunto I rejoined, "That which I, young gentleman, suggest in preference will be worth much more to you."

At last he is removed from among the living. Let us hope the best; to wit, that the mercies which have begun with man's forgetfulness will be crowned with God's forgiveness.[5]

Hardcastle. I perceive, my lord bishop, that writers of perishable fame may leave behind them something worth collecting. Represented to us by historians like your lordship, we survey a light character as a film in agate, and a noxious one as a toad in marble.

Burnet. How near together, Mr Hardcastle, are things which appear to us the most remote and opposite!—how near is death to life, and vanity to glory! How deceived are we, if our expressions are any proofs of it, in what we might deem the very matters most subject to our senses! The haze above our heads we call the heavens, and the thinnest of air the firmament.

[5 Note in 2nd ed. reads: "Little did I imagine that the extraordinary man, the worst parts of whose character are represented here, should indeed have been carried to the tomb so immaturely. If before the dialogue was printed, he had performed those services to Greece which will render his name illustrious to eternity, those by which he merited such funereal honours as, in the parsimony of praise, knowing its value in republics, she hardly would have decreed to the most deserving of her heroes, if, I repeat, he had performed those services, the performance of which I envy him from my soul, and as much as any other does the gifts of heaven, he threw away so carelessly, never would I, from whatever provocation, have written a syllable against him. I had avoided him; I had slighted him; he knew it: he did not love me; he could not. While he spoke or wrote against me, I said nothing in print or conversation: the

taciturnity of pride gave way to other feelings, when my friends, men so much better, and (let the sincerity of the expression be questioned by those who are unacquainted with us) so much dearer, so much oftener in my thoughts were assailed by him too intemperately. Let any man who has been unfair or injurious to me, show that he has been so to me only, and I offer him my hand at once, with more than mere forgiveness. Alas! my writings are not upon the slate: no finger, not of Time himself, who dips it in the clouds of years and in the storm and tempest, can efface the written. Let me be called what I may . . I confess it, I am more inconsistent than he was. I do not talk of weeping or bewailing or lamenting, for I hate false words, and seek with care, difficulty, and moroseness, those that fit the thing . . . why then should I dissemble that, if I shed no tears, they are at this moment in my eyes! O that I could have clasped his hand before he died! only to make him more enamoured of his own virtues and to keep him with them always! A word to those who talk of inconsistency. There is as much of it in him who stands while another moves, as in him who moves while another stands. To condemn what is evil, and to commend what is good, is consistent: to retract an error, to soften an asperity, to speak all the good we can, after worse ill than we would in that and more. If I must understand the word inconsistency as many do, I wish I may be inconsistent with all my enemies. I will take especial care that my inconsistency never makes me a worse man or a richer." This note, though not repeated in later editions, can be found altered and distributed among other Conversations.]

IV. THE ABBÉ DELILLE AND WALTER LANDOR.[1]

The Abbé Delille was the happiest of creatures, when he could weep over the charms of innocence and the country in some

[1 For a critical account of "Delille," see Sainte Beuve "Portraits Littéraires." He left France in the year 1800, at the close of the terror, which, though it silenced his singing, did not endanger his life. After visiting Switzerland and Germany he came to England, where he was welcomed by the Whig men of letters. Landor, who was at that time in training for a Whig pamphleteer, was inclined to mock at him, at his translation of "Paradise Lost" and his poems descriptive of the country joys, which he never cared to visit for himself. But the Abbé's witty talk seems to have prevailed; and accordingly the Abbé was chosen as the audience for Landor's magisterial comments on French verse. The criticism in the Conversation is not accurate enough to be of value, but the digressions are, as Mr Forster says, "masterly." (See "Life," pp, 84, 246. Vol. i., 1824. Vol. i., 1826. Works, i., 1846. Works, iv., 1876.)]

crowded and fashionable circle at Paris. We embraced most pathetically on our first meeting there, as if the one were condemned to quit the earth, the other to live upon it.

Delille. You are reported to have said that descriptive poetry has all the merits of a handkerchief that smells of roses?

Landor. This, if I said it, is among the things which are neither false enough nor true enough to be displeasing. But the Abbé Delille has merits of his own. To translate Milton well is more laudible than originality in trifling matters; just as to transport an obelisk from Egypt, and to erect it in one of the squares, must be considered a greater labor than to build a new milliner's shop.

Delille. Milton is indeed extremely difficult to translate; for, however noble and majestic, he is sometimes heavy, and often rough and unequal.

Landor. Dear Abbé! porphyry is heavy, gold is heavier; Ossa and Olympus are rough and unequal; the steppes of Tartary, though high, are of uniform elevation: there is not a rock, nor a birch, nor a cytisus, nor an arbutus upon them great enough to shelter a new-dropped lamb. Level the Alps one with another, and where is their sublimity? Raise up the vale of Tempe to the downs above, and where are those sylvan creeks and harbors in which the imagination watches while the soul reposes; those recesses in which the gods partook the weaknesses of mortals, and mortals the enjoyments of the gods?

You have treated our poet with courtesy and distinction: in your trimmed and measured dress, he might be taken for a Frenchman. Do not think me flattering. You have conducted Eve from Paradise to Paris, and she really looks prettier and smarter than before she tripped. With what elegance she rises from a most awful dream! You represent her (I repeat your expression) as springing up *en sursaut*, as if you had caught her asleep and tickled the young creature on that sofa.

Homer and Virgil have been excelled in sublimity by Shakspeare and Milton, as the Caucasus and Atlas of the old world by the Andes and Teneriffe of the new; but you would embellish them all.

Delille. I owe to Voltaire my first sentiment of admiration for Milton and Shakspeare.

Landor. He stuck to them as a woodpecker to an old forest-

tree, only for the purpose of picking out what was rotten: he has made the holes deeper than he found them, and, after all his cries and chatter, has brought home but scanty sustenance to his starveling nest.

Delille.[2] Voltaire is not always light, nor deficient in fire.

Landor. Even smoke hath solid parts, and takes fire sometimes.

Delille. You must acknowledge that there are fine verses in his tragedies.

Landor. Whenever such is the first observation, be assured, M. l'Abbé, that the poem, if heroic or dramatic, is bad. Should a work of this kind be excellent, we say, "How admirably the characters are sustained! What delicacy of discrimination! There is nothing to be taken away or altered without an injury to the part or to the whole." We may afterward descend on the versification. In poetry, there is a greater difference between the good and the excellent than there is between the bad and the good. Poetry has no golden mean: mediocrity here is of another metal, which Voltaire however had skill enough to encrust and polish. In the least wretched of his tragedies, whatever is tolerable is Shakspeare's; but, gracious Heaven! how deteriorated! When he pretends to extol a poet he chooses some defective part, and renders it more so whenever he translates it. I will repeat a few verses from Metastasio in support of my assertion. Metastasio was both a better critic and a better poet, although of the second order in each quality; his tyrants are less philosophical, and his chambermaids less dogmatic. Voltaire was, however, a man of abilities, and author of many passable epigrams, beside those which are contained in his tragedies and heroics; yet it must be confessed that, like your Parisian lackeys, they are usually the smartest when out of place.

Delille. What you call epigram gives life and spirit to grave works, and seems principally wanted to relieve a long poem. I do not see why what pleases us in a star should not please us in a constellation. The[3] coarser bread is that of the larger loaf; we should therefore put into it more salt and leaven.

I believe you have no adequate translation of the *Henriade.* I

[2] From "*Delille*" to "sometimes" (2 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

[3] From "The" to "leaven" (2 lines) added in 2nd ed. From "I" to "Delil e" (28 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

doubt whether I myself have sufficient mastery over the English language to render it worthily.

Landor. Is it possible to doubt of your powers? May not the commencement be somewhat like this?

"I sing the hero, vanquisher
Of France, and Mayenne too,
The king of all his subjects,
And father of no few;
One never out-manœuvred
At rapier or intrigue,
Who parried off the Spaniard
And fairly bit the League.
Descend from heaven's top-gallery,
Descend, O Truth august!
And sprinkle o'er my writing
Thy pink and scented dust."

Delille. *Ah, ça!* That last thought is a bright one indeed! Voltaire would have emptied his snuff-box to replenish it with that fine powder. But—pardon! Our language has certain shades which none but a Frenchman can seize. There are here a few points of difference in the sentiment. You have indeed abundantly compensated for them, by the delicate allusion to our poet's theatre. But—but—*top-gallery!*—Ah Mr Landor! even Homer would have failed: he would indeed. Our spirit, our *finesse*, our delicacy, are peculiarly ours.

Landor. I will never try again any thing so arduous.

Delille. Epigram and versification are the main secrets of French poetry; to which must be added an exactness of thought and a brevity of expression, such for instance as we admire in Boileau. But you promised me something of Metastasio.

Landor. I will repeat the lines, with Voltaire's observations.

The King of Parthia is brought in chains before the Emperor Hadrian, and has leisure for the following paraphrase, by which he would signify that his ruin itself shall be subservient to his revenge:—

Sprezza il furor del vento
Robusta quercia, avvezza
Di cento verni e cento
Le ingiurie a tolerar.
E se pur cadde al suolo,
Spiega per l'onde il volo,
E con quel vento istesso
Va contrastando il mar

Con quel vento istesso! it must make haste then. Voltaire had forgotten the art of concealing his insincerity, when he praised as a *sublime air* the worst and most far-fetched thought in all the operas of Metastasio. He could read Italian poetry; he could write French: we have seen how he judged of the least familiar, let us now inquire how he judges of the most. He considers, then, the following lines in *Mithridate* as a model of perfection:—

> J' ai sçu par une longue et pénible industrie
> Des plus mortels venins prévenir la furie.
> Ah! qu'il m'e *ût* mieux valu, plus sage ou plus heureux,
> Et repoussant les traits d'un amour dangereux,
> Ne pas laisser remplir d'ardeurs empoisonnées
> Un cœur déjà glacé par *le froid des années*.

Alas! the cold of his years, in comparison with the cold of his wit, is but as a flake of snow to a mass of frozen mercury.

Delille.[4] There often are quickness and spirit in the criticisms of Voltaire: but these, I acknowledge, do not constitute a good critic, although a good critic will not have been such without them. His versatility and variety are more remarkable than his correctness. On subjects where religion was not concerned, he was more accurate and dispassionate.

Landor. The physical world seemed a vast thing to him, for it must be a vast thing to contain Paris. He could not imagine that the earth had ever been covered by the sea, but that the shells on mountains were tossed there by Nature in her hours of idleness, to excite, no doubt, the curiosity of English travellers. Never did it once occur to him that changes are taking place eternally in every particle of our solar system, and of other solar systems far remote from ours; never did it occur to him that the ocean and the world within it are less in the hand of God than a bowl of milk with a morsel of bread within it are in a child's where the one is soon dissolved and dislocates the other. But his taste in high poetry is no better than his judgment in high philosophy. Among[5] the number of his futile and rash remarks, he declares that nothing in Homer is equivalent to Hesiod's

[4 From "*Delille*" to "them" (4 lines) added in 2nd ed. From "His" to "philosophy" (16 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[5 Second ed. reads: "Among . . . by it; I speak of his Works and Days; for the other two are worth nothing, whether his or not. But," &c. From "Among" to "Achilles" (15 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

description of Pandora. The homely and somewhat dull poem of Hesiod is indeed to a certain degree enlivened by it. But if Voltaire could have read a sentence of Greek, even without understanding one word, the music of those verses in the Odyssea, imitated so well by Lucretius,* on the habitations of the gods, and of those others where the mother of Ulysses † tells him the cause of her decease, would have checked him in the temerity of his decision. Nothing can excel the harmony of these passages, and the poetry they contain is equally perfect. How contemptible then is that critic, and how greatly more that poet, who prefers an indifferent piece of satire not only to these, but to the parting of Hector and Andromache and to the interview of Priam and Achilles!

Delille. Acknowledge at least that in tales and in history he has done something.

Landor. Yes, he has united them very dexterously. In the lighter touches of irony and derision he excels Rabelais and rivals[6] Molière; but in that which requires vigor of conception, and there is a kind which does require it, he falls short of Cervantes and Swift. You have other historians not only more faithful, but as powerful in style and as profound in thought. I place him barely on a level with Robertson, although in composition he may have an advantage over him; nor in disquisition is he comparable to Gibbon, whose manner, which many have censured, I think in general well suited to the work. In the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* there is too much to sadden and disgust: a smile in such a narrative on some occasions is far from unacceptable; if it should be succeeded by a sneer, it is not the sneer of bitterness which falls not on debility, nor of triumph which accords not with contempt. The colors, it is true, are gorgeous, like those of the setting sun; and such were wanted. The style is much swayed by the sentiment. Would that which is proper for the historian of Fabius and Scipio, of Hannibal and Pyrrhus, be proper, too, for Augustulus and the popes? Gibbon could be grave when an

* Odys. vi. v. 42. † Odys. xi. v. 197.

[6 "Rivals" added in 3rd ed. Four lines below, 1st ed. reads: "thought. I do not even place him on a level with our Hume, and hardly with Robertson . . . advantage over both, certainly over the latter greatly; nor is he at all comparable . . . I think admirably suited," &c.]

emperor like Julian commanded it; but could he, or could any one, on rising from the narration of a Greek historian, who has described how an empress played "the royal game of goose"?

Delille. Gibbon, one would imagine, was a mixed production of two different races in Africa, and borrowed the moral features from the one, the physical from the other. The Kabobiguas have no worship, sacrifice, ceremonies, or priests; and the Housouanas have a nose which projects little more than five or six lines; half the face seems to be forehead. This,[7] however, is no reply to your observations on his style. Accordant it may be indeed with the corruption of government and morals it describes; but is it not accordant likewise with the corruption of language at the time?

Landor. I am afraid I should myself be guilty of another great fault attributed to him, that is digression, if I entered into the inquiry with the minuteness and to the extent you might demand. It must be confessed that, in his voluminous work, thirty (or perhaps more) instances of Frenchified or Latinized phraseology may be detected; and, what is worse, sometimes a puerility, contrasting violently with his gravity and pomp, intrudes upon us. His "golden tomb" of the silkworm is worse even than the Alps of Tacitus "faithful to the snow."

Delille. You will not, then, insist on his superiority over Voltaire in prose.

Landor. Certainly not: no writer is, where eloquence is uncalled for. Gibbon is habituated to a scholastic tone and strut on all occasions, pacing up and down the unventilated school of rhetoric with a measured and heavy step: Voltaire, on the contrary, is easy and animated, vigorous and supple; there is everywhere nerve enough, and nowhere a superfluity of flesh. His language is always perspicuous, which cannot be said of Gibbon's, and which is the first requisite of style. We will return to him in his criticisms, where he is seldom wrong while he treats on prose. But when he calls the French poetry strong and energetic, he shows himself insensible that the nature both of the language and of the metre prohibits it: when he calls the Italian weak and effeminate and unfit for action, he overlooks his inconsistency in

[7 From "This" to "But" (26 lines) added in 3rd ed. First ed. reads: "forehead. *Landor.* When Voltaire calls," &c.]

remarking that "we respect Homer, but read Tasso." In[8] his criticisms on poetry, I confess to you that, if you will allow me to deliver my opinion in the words of Chaucer,

"He hath a voice as weak as hath a *gote*."

No continental poet is less weak and effeminate than Chiabrera; whose works, I apprehend, Voltaire was just as incapable of appreciating as Homer's. Did he ever hear of Filicaja?—rich in thought as Pindar himself, and, on one occasion, more enthusiastic.

Delille. Enthusiastic as Pindar! Ah, M. Landor!

Landor. Abbé, I said *more* enthusiastic; for in criticism I love correctness. We have lost the greater and (some believe) the better part of Pindar's poetry: what remains is more distinguished for an exquisite selection of topics than for enthusiasm. There is a grandeur of soul which never leaves him, even in domestic scenes; and his genius does not rise on points or peaks of sublimity, but pervades the subject with a vigorous and easy motion, such as the poets attribute to the herald of the gods. He is remarkable for the rich economy of his ideas and the temperate austerity of his judgment; and he never says more than what is proper, nor otherwise than what is best.[9]

I remember an observation of yours, that "the dithyrambic is almost entirely lost to the moderns, whose language is still less adapted to it than the Latin." * On the contrary, *all* the modern languages, with the sole exception of yours, are much better adapted to the dithyrambic than that is.

The Baron de Couture, in his notes on Lucretius, is enamoured of his native tongue, although less desperately than Henri Étienne, who calls it, "the best of all tongues possible,"—not existing or extinct, but within the gift of the divinity. The more judicious lover thus expresses his admiration: "If it were permitted me, without offending any one, to say a few words to the advantage of our language, it appears to me that we may find in it all the

[8 From "In" to "*gote*" (4 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

[9 First ed. reads: "best, and he appears the superior of mortals in the perfection of wisdom as of poetry." From "I" to "evident" (35 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

* Se *prête* moins à la sublimité de l'enthousiasme.

ease, the polish, and the majesty of the Roman. To reproach it with its poverty is an outrage. Do not let us cast upon it our own defects: the sterility is in our thoughts. If we do but think, our language will furnish us with expressions. Perhaps I may be a little too partial to it."

Delille. Not at all! not at all!

Landor. He proceeds in acknowledging that he may be rather so in placing it with the Latin, to which, beyond all other of its excellencies, it is unquestionably the rival (he says) in poetry. His next observation is that, if the Latin had the constraint of measure and of rhyme to vanquish, he doubts whether it ever would attain the charm of the French.

Delille. Very reasonably: I doubt it too; or, rather, I am certain it would not.

Landor. If an organ were forced to imitate a ring of bells, I doubt whether the ring of bells would not succeed the best. He might have added, if the Romans had been obliged to split their heroic verses down the back like broiled mackerel, he doubts whether they would have been better than yours. But your language has a greater quantity of inharmonious sounds, and a smaller of distinct words for rhyme, than any other that employs it. Let a German, a Swede, a Russian, read to you a few pages of his poetry, and this will be evident. Many [11] of the rhymes, indeed a great proportion of them, are formed by the termination of the tenses. Now surely no good writer would wish two similar tenses at equal distances. Talma, in remarking to me that a French actor has difficulties to surmount which an English has not, began with pointing out the necessity he lies under of breaking the joints and claws of every verse, as of pigeons for a pie, and of pronouncing it as if it were none at all; thus undoing what the writer had taken the greater part of his pains to accomplish.

The business of the higher poetry is to chasten and elevate the mind by exciting the better passions, and to impress on it lessons of terror and of pity by exhibiting the self-chastisement of the worse. There should be as much of passion as is possible, with as much of reason as is consistent with it.

[11 From "Many" to "distances" (4 lines) added in 3rd ed. From "Talma" to "accomplish" (7 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

How admirable is the union of these in the ode of Filicaja to Sobieski!

Delille. Do you really then prefer this Italian to Boileau? His ode [12] to the king is fine.

Landor. There is nearly as much difference between his ode and the Italian, as between Sobieski and Louis; nearly as much as between the liberation of Europe and the conflagration of the Palatinate. Give me the volume, if that in your hand is it.*

"The *high* wisdom of a *young* hero is not the *tardy* fruit of *slow old* age."

Dear Abbé, can you ever have read this commencement, and call the author a man of genius or taste?

. . . Ma muse tremblante
Fuit d'un si *grand fardeau* la charge *trop pesante.*

Vulgarity in the metaphor and redundance in the expression, and look! it occurs again at the conclusion. Addison tells you that he does, what he gives no sign of doing, that he

"*Bridles* in his struggling Muse with pain."

But [14] it is better to turn a Muse into a mare than into a mule or ass, which Boileau does; and Addison has redeemed the wretchedness of his poetry by the suavity and humour of his prose.

Et tandis que ton bras des peuples *redouté*
Va le foudre à la main rétablir l'équité.

[12 The Ode to the King is the "Discours Au Roi" to which Landor recurs afterwards, then using the correct title.]

* Our [13] popular critics have never suspected that Boileau is deficient in correctness of thought or expression. It is chiefly for the edification of those who recommend him as a model that this dialogue was written. A grub, if hooked with dexterity, may catch a tunny.

[14 From "But" to "ass" added in 2nd ed. "Which Boileau does" added in 3rd ed.]

[13 This note is printed as part of the note at end of Conversation in 1st and 2nd eds. It there reads: "I should be sorry to have debased these conversations by attention to a writer of so mean a cast as Boileau if it might not be useful to some of our popular . . . expression, and who recommend him to the rising poets as a perfect model. A grub, if you hook it with . . tunny. I throw mine upon the water and leave it there."]

I always fancied that the *foudre* is rather a destroyer than an establisher. But why was the arm of Louis feared by the nations, if it was armed only to establish equity? The arm with the thunderbolt in the hand is worse than tautology.[15]

Let us turn to his Satires.

Satire I.

Et puis, comment percer *cette foule effroyable*
De rimeurs affamés . *dont le nombre l'accable* . .
Un lit et deux placets composaient tout son bien;
Ou, pour en mieux parler, Saint-Amant n'avait rien.

It would puzzle me to divine in what this *mieux parler* consists. There never was a verse more idle than this better spoken one, or what would incur more ridicule in any notoriously bad writer. The bed and the *deux placets* show the extremes of Saint-Amant's poverty, without the least expenditure of wit or fancy to light up the chamber; any other piece of worthless furniture might have been added. This, however, did not suit the rhyme, Boileau's goddess of Necessity. He therefore ridicules the man for not having what he had just before ridiculed him for having.

Satire II.

Pour qui tient Apollon tous ses trésors ouverts,
Et qui sçait à quel coin se marquent les bons vers?

Behold the art of sinking![16]

Satire III.

Nothing can be more flat and farther out of character than the last lines from a person who professes, just before, an utter indifference to the pleasures of the table.

Satire IV.

Tout hérissé de grec, tout bouffi d'arrogance.

All this, excepting the last word, is in another place. The

[15 First ed. reads: "tautology, if indeed anything can be worse in a poet than this most obvious proof of debility. Let," &c.]

[16 First ed. reads: "sinking. Molière goes into Apollo's treasury, and finds out in it how he marks his pocket-handkerchief." Second ed. for "pocket-handkerchief" reads "cravat."]

idea of *hérissé de grec* arose, I presume, from the sharp and slender forms of the Greek letters as we see them printed. A line of Greek appeared to Boileau like a hedge of aloes.

La même erreur les fait errer diversement.

A contradiction the more apparent, as he had mentioned the hundred roads in which the travellers wandered, some to the right, some to the left. He has ridiculed the errors into which men have run from the imperfection of their reason; a great folly! He now gravely rails at reason itself; a greater!

Que si d'un sort fâcheux la maligne inconstance.

The inconstancy of a *sort fâcheux* was never before complained of, still less called malignant.

Enfin un médecin fort expert en son art
Le guérit . . . par adresse ou plutôt par hasard.

It is quite unimportant to the story, if not to the verse, whether the physician cured the man by skill or chance; but to say that he was *fort expert en son art*, and subjoin that he effected his cure *plutôt par hasard*, proves that the poet must have taken his expressions altogether at hazard.

Satire v.

On fait cas d'un coursier qui, fier . . . et plein de cœur . . .

Does what?—

Fait paraître en courant sa bouillante vigueur.

This is natural enough, and could not well be otherwise; but what think you of a horse that *jamais ne se lasse?* Do not be surprised: he becomes just like another, and

dans la carrière
S'est couvert *mille fois* . . . d'une *noble* poussière.[17]

Satire vi.

A man who reasons must be aware how silly it is to write an

[17 First ed. reads: "poussière. That is, as your countrymen would have said, not Monsieur Possière, but Monsieur de Poussière, a most important distinction. Satire vi.," &c.]

angry satire on cats: yet the first thing that provokes the complaints of Boileau against Paris is the noise of these animals, and their dangerous conspiracies, in league with the rats, against his repose. Such[18] a confederation is about as rational and natural, and must end in the same manner as the alliance of the crowned crimps against your country, in the name of the holy and undivided Trinity. He then calls this disturbance the least of his misfortunes, and attacks the cocks, which of course are a plague to Paris. Yet neither the cocks, nor the blacksmith who falls next under his displeasure, are, if we may judge from the outcry he makes, so grievous an evil to him as the former licentious disturbers of his peace.

> Les voleurs à l'instant s'emparent de la ville.
> Le bois *le plus funeste* et le moins fréquenté
> Est, au prix de Paris, un lieu de sûreté.

Exaggeration may be carried to any height where there is wit, but rolls down like a load of gravel where there is none.

> Malheur donc à celui qu'une affaire imprévue
> Engage un peu trop tard au détour d'une rue!

He does not seem conscious that the praises he has been lavishing on Louis are worth nothing, if there is a foundation for this complaint. Thieves are not subjects for satire; but those are whose capitals are crowded with them.

> Il faudrait, dans l'enclos d'un vaste logement,
> Avoir loin de la rue un autre appartement.

This is curious; for it demonstrates to us that there certainly must have been a time when it was considered, or offered, as wit, satire, or moral.

Delille.[19] You are very fastidious for one so little advanced in years.

Landor. I was more fastidious when I was younger, and I could detect a fallacy in composition as readily as now. I had been accustomed to none but the best models. I had read Pindar and the great tragedians more than once before I had read half the plays of Shakspeare. My prejudices in favor of ancient

[18] From "Such" to "Trinity" (4 lines) added in 2nd ed.]
[19] From "*Delille*" to "open" (32 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

literature began to wear away on *Paradise Lost;* and even the great hexameter sounded to me tinkling when I had recited aloud in my solitary walks on the sea-shore the haughty appeal of Satan and the deep penitence of Eve. I was above twenty-five years old when I first looked at Dante; one cyclopian corner of the great quaternion.

Delille. You studied much, however; and study sharpens criticism.

Landor. I doubt it; unless by references and comparisons. Only four years of my life were given up much to study; and I regret that I spent so many so ill. Even these debarred me from no pleasure; for I seldom read or wrote within-doors, excepting a few hours at night. The learning of those who are called the learned is learning at second-hand: the primary and most important must be acquired by reading in our own bosoms; the rest a deep insight into other men's. What is written is mostly an imperfect and unfaithful copy.

Delille. You have taken little from others.

Landor. When I had irrigated my field from the higher sources of literature, I permitted the waste water to run off again. Few things remained in my memory as they entered; more encumbered it; many assumed fresh combinations.

Come: we must talk no longer about so obscure a man, in the presence of this severe censor and eminent poet. We will open

Satire VII.

> Mais tout fat me déplaît . . . et me blesse les yeux;
> Je le *poursuis partout.*

Idle and silly! were it practicable, it would be the ruin of satire.

Delille. Turn over, and you will find Boileau warmed by the fine French sentiment of loyalty to his king. Ay, that pleases you, I see.

Landor. No sentiment is more just or reasonable than loyalty; but it should belong as much to kings as to their people: where it is not reciprocal, it is worth nothing. What insincerity, what baseness, to rave against the wild ambition of Alexander, who had all the spirit and all the talents of a

consummate warrior, and to crouch at the feet of Louis with every expression of homage and admiration!—of Louis, who had no such talents, no such spirit; who exposed his person in no battle, but who ordered a massacre to win the favor of a saint, and consumed a province to cure a heresy!—a coward, a bigot, perfidious, ungrateful, perjured,[20] who died so despised and hated, that his worshippers jumped up from their kneeling, and pelted his carcass with mire and ordure as it went to burial!

Delille. Ah, M. Landor! you cannot do him justice. You must exaggerate or you must detract.

Landor. Fénelon, than whom there never was a more dispassionate judge or a more veracious man, says of him in a letter to Madame de Maintenon, which it is probable he intended she should show to him, "that he had no idea of his kingly duties." Of what duties had he any?

The satire we have dipped into is borrowed in many parts from Horace, in many from Juvenal; yet Boileau has contrived to torpify with prose and puffing all the gayety of the one, and to weaken with cold and hoarseness all the declamation of the other.

Satire IX.

C'est à vous, mon Esprit, à qui je veux parler.

It is a pity that his *Esprit* was not summoned to this conference earlier; but even now it is only called to be talked to, and has more to hear than to say.

Mais moi qui, *dans le fond*, sçais bien ce . . .

A significant nod, to give the sentence the appearance of wit, which, if it lies anywhere in it, lies *dans le fond.*

Phébus a-t-il pour vous aplani le Parnasse?

The word *aplani* is not a very happy one since the difficulties of Parnassus are the triumphs of the poet. I must observe here that Apollo, Parnassus, &c., are too frequently used by your poets, and that nothing shows barrenness of invention more evidently

[20 First ed. adds "sacrilegious" to the list. Five lines below, 1st ed reads: "exaggerate. He is the Grand monarque. *Landor.* This satire is borrowed . . . contrived to sink all the gaiety," &c.]

than a perpetual recurrence to mythology on subjects unconnected with it. I [21] know but one thing so subversive of illusion in works of fiction.

Delille. What is that?

Landor. The cant-word of novelists, *our hero;* by which you meet the author face to face inopportunely, and the vision is intercepted by him bodily. The hero whom he represents to us is perhaps a young gentleman fresh from college, whose feats of heroism have been upon a Wilton carpet, or in a pleasant walk among the trees with Emily, or in an innocent ride between two turnpike-gates. It closes with falling in love, with struggling to get out of it, with succeeding by the Leucadian leap of marriage, or in case of failure, as may happen, with blessing her devoutly "on his last legs," as we say in England. But again to an author who never was in this predicament, and who certainly leads us not into temptation of any kind.

> Et ne sçavez-vous pas que, sur ce mont sacré,
> Qui ne vole au sommet tombe au plus bas degré.

This is neither true nor ingenious. Horace has misled him by being misunderstood, where he says,—

> . . . mediocribus esse poetis
> Non homines, non dî, non concessere columnæ.

Now Horace himself, and Catullus and Tibullus, have never reached nor attempted to reach the summit of Parnassus; and equally certain is it that they have not fallen *au plus bas degré.* Their poetry is excellent in its kind; as among the French is that of La Fontaine. It is only those whose poetry has risen no higher than to mediocrity in its kind, whatever that kind may be, whose existence as poets is destined to a short duration. Catullus and Horace will be read as long as Homer and Virgil, and more often and by more readers.

> Par l'*éclat d'un fardeau* trop pesant à porter.

This is the third time within a few pages that I have observed the metaphor; but I never heard until now that a *fardeau* could have an *éclat.* If it ever is attended by one, it

[21 From "I" to "kind" (15 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

must be, not while it is borne, but at the moment when it is thrown off.

Peindre Bellone *en feu*, tonnant de toutes parts . . .

And what else? Mars, Minerva, Jupiter, the Fates, the Furies!

Et le Belge effrayé . .

but surely in some act of awful devotion; that, if we fall from such a height, it may be into the bosom of Pity. Ah no!

. . . fuyant sur ses rampârts.

How contemptible are these verses on Bellona and the Dutchman, in comparison with those they are intented to imitate!

Cupidum, pater optime, vires
Deficiunt: neque enim quivis horrentia pilis
Agmina, nec fractâ pereuntes cuspide Gallos,
Aut labentis equo describat vulnera Parthi.

Delille. This satire contains the line which has been so often quoted,—

Et le clinquant du Tasse à tout l'or de Virgile,—

in which Boileau has scarcely his wonted discrimination. Surely, Tasso is a superb poet.

Landor. A few remarks on that foolish verse. Your poets always felt a violent jealousy of the Italian. If Virgil had lived in the age of Tasso, and Tasso in the age of Virgil, Boileau would have transferred and commuted the designation, and have given the tinsel to Virgil, the gold to Tasso. There is little of tinsel in the *Gierusalemme*, and much of gold. The poet fails whenever he attempts the sublime, generally so called; but he seldom overloads his descriptions with idle words or frivolous decorations. His characters are more vivid and more distinct than Virgil's, and greatly more interesting. The heroes of the *Æneid* are like the half-extinct frescoes of Raphael; but what is wanting in the frescoes of the painter is effaced by time, what is wanting in the figures of the poet was wanting in his genius. No man ever formed in his mind an idea of Dido, or perhaps

ever wished to form it; particularly on finding her memory so extensive and her years so mature that she could recollect the arrival of Teucer at Sidon. Mezentius is called a despiser of the gods; yet the most pious speech in the *Æneid* comes from the lips of Mezentius, the most heroical of all the characters in that poem, and the most resigned to the will of Heaven:—

> Ast de me divôm pater atque hominum rex
> Viderit.

But who would walk among the scenery of woods and waterfalls, of glades and forests, of valleys in their retirement and of corn-fields in their richness and profusion, for the sake of bringing home a few sticks and stubble? or who could receive more pleasure from an occupation than from surveying the majestic growth of the trees and the infinite variety of the foliage?[22]

Virgil has blemishes like Tasso, and Tasso has beauties like Virgil. The *Æneid*, I venture to affirm, is the most misshapen of epics,—an epic of episodes; for these constitute the greater and better part. The *Gierusalemme Liberata* is, of all such compositions, the most perfect in its plan. In regard to execution, read any one book attentively, and I am persuaded, M. l'Abbé, that you would rather have written it than all the poetry of Voltaire and Boileau.[23]

Let us go on with the volume before us.

> de sang-froid . . . et sans être amoureux,
> Pour quelqu'Iris en l'air faire le langoureux.

The superfluous on the superfluous! Boileau is one of the forty who have done the same thing. One would imagine that

[22 First ed. reads: "foliage. *Delille.* I would rather walk through a garden, listening to a fountain, culling roses and sprigs of jesamine, and meditating upon beautiful nature. But I am very happy that you admire Tasso. I never could determine whether he or Virgil had the most grace, and the most elegance, and have often wondered that the same country should have produced, even with the interval of fifteen centuries, two poets almost equal to our Racine. *Landor.* Virgil," &c.]

[23 First ed. reads: "Boileau; if indeed there is anything in either of them that could augment your reputation. Let," &c. Seven lines below, 1st ed. reads: "convention, celebrated as was Phryne. The," &c.]

there had lived in Paris some lady of this name, either by baptism or convention. The French poets, if they wished to interest the reader, should at least have engaged a name less hackneyed. Delia, Corinna, Lesbia, bring with them lively recollections. They are names not taken in vain by the Romans in the days of Roman glory; and the women to whom they were first given were not ideal. Synonymous with beauty, grace, fondness, tenderness, they delight the memory by locality; but we turn with indifference or with disgust from the common Palais Royal face of Iris. Boileau might have said to a patron, "you shall be my Apollo, my Richelieu, my Louis:" the expression has something to rest upon: and why should not love enjoy the same privilege as patronage? The[24] judicious La Fontaine has committed this inexcusable fault, and rendered it worse than he found it in any preceding poet; for, in an *Imitation of Anacreon*, he places Iris with Venus. Here he confuses the mythological Iris with the Iris to whom you raise, not a temple nor an altar (which I believe were never raised to the heavenly one), but a triangular hat over a buckled and powdered peruke.

> La Satire, en leçons, en nouveautés fertile,
> Sait seule assaisonner le plaisant et l'utile.

Rhyme consists in similarity of sound, not in identity: an observation that has escaped all your poets, and, what is more wonderful, all the Italian. Satire is less fertile in novelty than any other kind of poetry; and possesses not alone the power attributed to it, but, on the contrary, in a less degree than the rest. If it alone were endowed with this faculty, why should poets employ any kind else? Who would write what cannot be pleasant? Who, what cannot be useful? Satire alone would serve the purposes both of poetry and of prose: and we might expect to find a good satire in every good treatise on geometry, or metaphysics, or music, or cookery.

> Hé! mon dieu! craignez tout d'un auteur en courroux,
> Qui peut . . . Quoi? . . . Je m'entends . . Mais encor? . . .
> Taisez-vous.

Thus ends this long monologue between Boileau and his *Esprit*, which must have rejoiced heartily at its dismissal. Per-

[24 From "The" to "peruke" (7 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

haps no line is more suitable to the French taste than this last; so many short sentences, coming out singly and with breaks between them, like the notes in a cock's[25] crow; so many things of which almost every man fancies that he alone is in the secret. I must confess it is really one to me; and, after all the interpretations it will bear, I find neither wit nor satire in it, nor even the sting of a dead epigram.

Delille. When you compare the tenth satire of Boileau with the manner in which women are attacked by Juvenal, you must be filled with admiration at perceiving how superior French morality is to Roman.

Landor. That is a knotty question, M. l'Abbé: we might bruise our hands, if we attempted to lay hold of it; it is safer to confine our observations to poetry.

Que, si sous Adam même . . . et *loin avant Noé.*

The same fault incessantly recurring! What was under Adam was long before Noah. Your marquises were not very profound in chronology; but even the most ignorant of them probably knew this fact, notwithstanding the league between his confessor and his vices to keep him from reading the book where it is recorded. In Boileau there is really more of diffuseness than of brevity; few observe it, because it abounds in short sentences: and few are aware that sentences may be very short and the writer very prolix; as half-a-dozen stones rising out of a brook give the passenger more trouble than a plank across it.[26]

Villon et Saint-Gelais,
Arioste, Marot, Bocace, Rabelais.

One of the beauties at which Boileau aimed was the nitching of several names together in a verse, without any other word. Caligula spoke justly and admirably, when he compared the sentences of Seneca to lime without sand. Montesquieu, Voltaire,

[25 First ed. reads: "cock's morning hymn, which, allow me to observe, seems to have been taken by your countrymen as a model for their verse, not omitting even the interjectional scream with which it closes—so many," &c.]

[26 First ed. reads: "it, not to mention the greater chance of wetting the feet. Villon," &c.]

and their imitators, Frederick of Prussia and Catharine of Russia, were perhaps unconscious how perversely they imitated this blamable model of style, and how far they were in general from his gravity and acuteness. Florus and[27] Valerius Maximus seem chiefly to have captivated the attention and to have formed the manner of Voltaire; as the style of our historian Hume is evidently taken from a French translation of Machiavelli.

Delille. Montesquieu, of whom Voltaire was among the earliest and best imitators, was a great admirer of Florus. Cardinal Duperon ranked him next to Tacitus, and above Tite-Live.

Landor. Well, Abbé, let us go on, and we shall find, I warrant you, something as silly as that. We will leave the shallow red hat upon the peg. Voltaire owed much to Montesquieu, but greatly more to Le Sage, whose elegance, purity, and variety never have been and never will be exceeded. We now come among clumsier valets than his.

> *Seul* avec des valets, souvent voleurs et traîtres,
> *Et toujours, à coup sûr, ennemis de leurs maîtres.*

Why so? in any other respect than as *voleurs et traîtres.*

> Et, pour le rendre libre, il le faut enchaîner.

This verse alone was worth a pension from Louis. It is indeed the most violent antithesis that ever was constructed; but, as a maxim in politics, it is admirably adapted to your nation, most happy under a despot, and most faithful under a usurper.

> Et ne présume pas que Vénus ou Satan, &c.

The two mythologies ought never to be confounded. This is worse than Bellona and the Dutchman, or than Mars *et le fameux fort de Skink.*

> L'honneur est comme une île escarpée et sans bords:
> On n'y peut plus rentrer dès qu'on en est dehors.

The simile is imperfect, because the fact is untrue. If an island can be entered once, it can be entered twice.

> Avec un air plus sombre
> S'en aller méditer une vole au jeu d'hombre.

[27 "And Valerius Maximus," added in 2nd ed. Five lines below, from "*Delille*" to "his" (10 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

There is no reason, except the rhyme, for this *air plus sombre.* When the lady only *thinks* of playing, she has encountered no ill success, and expects none; otherwise she would not play.

Comme ce magistrat de hideuse mémoire.

The story of this magistrate is badly told; the progress of his passion is untraced. How much better is the Sir Balaam of Pope!

Mais qui pourrait compter le nombre des haillons?

This picture is overcharged. It appears to me that the author had written two descriptions, and not wishing to lose either, nor knowing what to do with both, tacked them together to compose the tenth satire. He confesses that "le récit passe un peu l'*ordinaire,*" and desires to know whether it could be given in fewer words. Horace will answer that it can be given both in fewer and better.

Mais qui la priverait huit jours *de ses plaisirs,*
Et qui, loin d'un galant . . . objet *de ses désirs.*

It is natural enough that the lady's gallant should be the object of her desires; but what shall we think of a versification which permits *de ses plaisirs* to be followed by *de ses désirs?*

Sa tranquille vertu conserve tous ses crimes.

A violent counterpoint! Antithesis was always fond of making inroads on the borders of absurdity.

Satire XII.

Et partout sa doctrine en peu de tems portée.

What can be added to its extent if it was *partout?* why—

Fut du Gange, du Nil, et du Tage écoutée

Another falling off! Who in the world ever made a voyage to the Ganges for the purpose of arriving at the Tagus? The verse itself did not exact this penance: it could have been written as easily,—

Fut du Tage, du Nil, et du Gange écoutée.

This would have described, as it was intended, the progress of the Christian faith. The[28] same fault is committed (and none but a bad reasoner, to say nothing of a bad poet, could commit it) in another couplet, which at this moment comes into my mind, but which, with many more, I have turned over.

Delille. Surely so grave a fault could hardly have escaped him twice.

Landor. What think you of

De Pékin . . à Paris . . et de Paris . . à Rome!

I know not where in any language to find such lethargic verses as the following:—

Sans simonie on peut contre un bien temporel
Hardiment échanger un bien spirituel.

Of all the wretched poets ridiculed by Boileau, not one, I believe, has written any thing so signally stupid. Turn to the *Discours au Roi.*

Je vais de toutes parts *où me guide ma veine,*
Sans tenir en marchant une route certaine;
Et, sans gêner ma plume en ce libre métier,
Je la laisse au hasard courir sur le papier.

This is untrue: if it were not, he would have written greatly worse than he did. Horace has misled him here, as on other occasions, by being misunderstood; he says,—

Ego apis Matinæ
More modoque
Grata carpentis thyma *per laborem*
Plurimum, &c.

This relates to the diversity of subjects chosen by the lyric poet; instead of which Boileau speaks merely of satires, and tells us that he corrects the age at hazard, and without the view or intention of correcting it.

Quand je vois ta sagesse en ses justes projets
D'une heureuse abondance enrichir tes sujets.

Here indeed he is a satirist, and a very bold one, and one who does not let his pen run at random over the paper.

Que je n'ai *ni le ton, ni la voix* assez forte.

[28 From "The" to "Rome!" (8 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

This verse resembles that in his translation of Sappho :—

Je ne sçaurais trouver . . . de langue . . . ni de voix.

He places the tone and the voice in contradistinction: but what is the difference? Where the tone is loud the voice is loud, at least for the time. Here, as everywhere, you find the never-failing characteristic of your verse. Your heroic line rises and falls at a certain pitch, like the handle of a pump.[29]

Delille. And yet our heroic verse is more generally read and applauded in Europe than the English.

Landor. Or than the Italian, or than the Latin, or than the Greek. Admiration is no proof of excellence: the point it comes from is its indication, and this point is one and narrow. It must proceed from reason: how few look for that! How few of those who look for it can find it in these regions! Where is the demonstration? Who is the demonstrator?

Epître 1. *Au Roi.*

Boileau had just issued a long and laborious writ against Équivoque; he had despatched against it Noah's ark by sea and Heresy by land, when Apollo *éperdu* makes him suddenly the

[29 First ed. reads: "pump. *Delille.* You know, M. Landor, even the glorious orb of Phœbus is defaced by spots. Besides, Boileau's satires were his earliest compositions in verse; and some blemishes in them have been detected by our own critics. But they are excusable, or rather they were inevitable. My experience has taught me that perfection is the offspring of labour, and that the muses must be wooed before they can be won. You will have remarked, no doubt, that my later works are much more delicately finished than my earlier. The former put me in mind of some rude village in a remote province, the latter more resemble the gardens of Versailles. It is the same in every art. Vestris, himself, though, as you are aware, he was nature's favourite child, could not invest his limbs with all those graces of attitude and motion, which electrified Paris and the world, until Time had organised his budding powers, and practice had modulated their rich luxuriance. But turn to Boileau's epistles, and in some of them at least you will find nothing against which you can object. The dust with which detraction has rubbed them, has only served to renew their exquisite polish. *Landor.* With your permission, then, we will continue our walk, and if we kick up diamonds instead of dirt, or if my blacking, instead of smearing a face, polishes a shoe, we shall be so much the gainers. Epitre i.," &c. This passage is omitted in 2nd ed. which reads as 3rd ed.]

prize of his adversary. He has the simplicity to tell Louis that Apollo has cautioned him thus:—

Cette mer où tu cours est célèbre en naufrages.

I hope Louis read this line some years afterward, when the application of it would scourge him severely. Deprived of all he had acquired by his treachery, unless the nation that brought him upon his knees had permitted two traitors, Harley and St John, to second the views of a weak, obstinate,[30] drunken old woman, and to obstruct those of policy and of England,—he had been carted to condign punishment in the Place de Grève, or at Tyburn. Such examples are much wanted, and, as they can rarely be given, should never be omitted.

This man is here called *grand roi* seven times within two hundred lines; and, to demonstrate that he really was so, the words are written in grand characters.

Te livrer le Bosphore, et . . . d'un vers *incivil*
Proposer au Sultan de te céder le Nil.

Can any one doubt that, if the letter *e* could have been added to *vers*, the poet would have written *civil* instead of *incivil?* I do not remember in any language an epithet so idle and improper.

Ne t'avons-nous pas *vu* dans les plaines Belgiques,
Quand l'ennemi vain*cu*, désertant ses remparts,
Au devant de ton joug courait de toutes parts,
Toi-même te borner?

Yes, with the assistance of William.[31]

Au devant de ton joug.

Surely, a beneficent prince has no occasion to impose a yoke upon those who run toward him willingly from all parts: nevertheless, the sentiment is national.

Iront de ta valeur *effrayer l'univers* . . .

[30 "Obstinate, drunken," added in 3rd ed.]

[31 First ed. reads: "William. Your poets and writers of every kind make all the world French. It has been well remarked, that a Frenchman when victorious is most truly called *vain cœur*, and that yours is the only nation upon earth which, when defeated, still retains this characteristic quantity, though transferring it to the part which it exposes to the enemy, and to specify which more particularly would not be decorous. Au devant," &c.]

A wise, beneficent, godlike action! but what follows?—

Et camper devant Dôle au milieu des hivers!!!

He grows more and more reasonable.

On verra les abus par ta main réformés,
La licence et l'orgueil en tous lieux réprimés,
Du débris des traitants ton épargne grossie,
Des subsides *affreux* la rigueur adoucie,
Le soldat, dans la paix, sage et . . . *laborieux*,
Nos artisans grossiers rendus . . . *industrieux*.

What idea must that nation entertain of poetry, which can call this so? To encounter such wretched lines, truly

C'est camper devant Dôle au milieu des hivers.

What more does Louis perform?—

Tantôt je tracerai tes *pompeux* bâtiments,
Du loisir d'un héros *nobles* amusements.

These noble amusements, with some others of the same hero, brought France into a state of poverty and wretchedness, which, neglected by his successors, hurled the least vicious of the family to the scaffold.

Delille.[32] I am afraid you will censure some of my finest verses; such as,—

Eh! qui du sommet d'un côteau
Voyant le Nil au loin rouler *ses eaux pompeuses*,
Détournerait les yeus de ce *riche tableau*
Et de ces eaux majestueuses?

Or,—

Tel le *vaste* Apennin de sa cime *hautaine*.

Or even this,—

Ah, si ce *noble* instinct par qui le *grand* Homére . . .

Landor. Fine verses are often bad poetry. If these are really yours, they are your very worst.

Delille. My friends think otherwise.

[32 From "*Delille*" to "eel-pie" (15 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

Landor. Then they do you injustice. Never take their opinion, in future, unless upon an eel-pie.

Epître III.

I turn over the leaves hastily. Here we shall discover what happened when Adam was fallen:—

Le chardon importun hérissa . . . les guérets,
Le serpent *venimeux* rampa dans . . . les forêts.

According to this, matters were bettered. If the serpent had always been there, Adam would have lost nothing, and the importunity of the thistle would have been little to be complained of if it had only been in the *guérets*.

Epître IV. *Au Roi.*

Comment en vers heureux assiéger Doësdourg,
Zutphen, Wagheninghen, Harderwic, Knotzembourg?

These names are tacked together for no other purpose than the rhyme. He complains that they are difficult to pronounce, meaning to say difficult to spell: for certainly none of them is very harsh; but whenever a Frenchman finds a difficulty in spelling a word, he throws in a handful of consonants to help him over: these are the fascines of M. Boileau's approaches. The sound of *Wurts* is not offensive to the ear, without which the poet says,—

Qui j'allais à tes yeux étaler de merveilles!

As you French pronounce *Zutphen*, &c., they are truly harsh enough. But that is owing to your nasal twang, the most disagreeable and disgusting of sounds: being produced by the same means as a stink is rejected, and thus reminding us of one. The syllable *Zut* is not harsher than the first in *Zethes*, or *phen* other than the first in *Phénix*. In fact, the sounds of *Grand Roi* are harsher than any that so powerfully offend him, as to stop him with his *raree-shew* on his back, when he had promised the king a peep at it. I well remember the difficulty I experienced in teaching a learned countryman of yours that,—

"'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won". . .

is really a verse, and that *'twas* should not be pronounced *it was*, —inviting him to read the first line of the *Iliad*, in which he stumbled at *θεά*, and fell flat on his face at Πηλη*ϊ*άδεω.

And [33] let me ask here in regard to your use of the alphabet, what man of what nation, ancient or modern, could imagine the existence of a people on the same globe with himself, who employ the letters *e a u x* to express a sound which he and all others would express by the single vowel *o ;* and that furthermore *oient* should signify neither more nor less than another single vowel *e ?* And what is your barbarity to the most beautiful of the liquids! In *fils* you disinherit it: in *Versailles* you pour two of them into a gargle. If there is a letter that ought to have more force and strength in it than any other, it is the letter *x*, which in fact is composed of two stout ones, *k* and *s :* yet you make nothing of it.

I will now show you what to any organs sensible of harmony is really disagreeable: four similar sounds for instance in one verse, which occur in the last of this Epistle, written (we may conjecture) while the din of the blacksmith's shop, before complained of, was ringing in his ears:—

> *Non, non*, ne fais*ons* plus de plaintes inutiles:
> Puisqu' ainsi *dans* deux mois tu pr*ends* quar*ante* villes
> Assuré des *bons* vers *dont ton* bras me r*épond*,
> Je t'at*tends dans* deux *ans* aux bords de l'Helles*pont*.

I know nothing of the Dutch language: but I will venture a wager with you, M. l'Abbé, that the harshest verse in it is less so than these; and a Greek or an Italian shall decide. There are dozens similar.

> Je vais *faire* la *guerre* aux habitans de l'*air*.
> Il me *faut* du re*pos*, des pr*és* et des for*êts*.
> Ont *cru* me rendre affr*eux* aux *yeux* de l'univers.
> Ses écrits pleins de *feu* partout brillent aux *yeux*.

The man must have been born in a sawmill, or in France, or under the falls of Niagara, whose ear can suffer these. In the same Epistle we find,—

> A ces mots, essuyant sa barbe *limoneuse*,
> Il prend d'un vieux guerrier la figure *poudreuse*

[33 From "And" to "it" (12 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

Another equivocation. Surely, if Boileau had found such poetry in an author of small repute, he would have quoted it as a thing too low to kick up, too flat to ridicule.

What does the Rhine, after wiping the mud off his whiskers with a clean cambric handkerchief, and assuming the powdered face of an old lieutenant-general? He

> Du *fameux* fort de Skink prend la route *connue!*

And Louis, what is he about?—

> Louis, les animant du feu de son courage,
> Se plaint de sa grandeur . . . qui l'attache au rivage.

He had many such complaints to make against his grandeur: Cæsar and Alexander had none. A Gascon ran away from a fortress about to be bombarded; he was intercepted and brought back; and, on his trial before a court-martial, said in his defence that he had wished to exhibit his courage in the plain. If this had been permitted, it would probably have been found to be of the same kind as that of Louis.

Turn to the eighth Epistle, which is again addressed to the king. I pass over the intermediate, because it is reasonable to presume that, if Boileau looks not well in a court dress, he never looks well. In other cases, indeed, it would be unjust to confound the poet with the courtier: in him the courtier is the better part. I observe, too, that these Epistles are particularly celebrated by the editor for "the suppleness and grace of the versification, and for the equality, solidity, and fulness of the style."

> Et mes vers en ce style, ennuyeux, sans appas,
> Déshonorent ma plume et ne t'honorent pas.

If the verses were *ennuyeux et sans appas*, it is evident enough that they dishonored his pen; and what dishonored his pen could not honor his prince. This thought, which Boileau has repeated so often and so ill, is better expressed by several other of your poets, and shortly before by Malleville:

> Mais je sçais quel effort demande cet ouvrage;
> La grandeur du sujet me doit épouvanter;
> Je trahirais sa gloire au lieu de l'augmenter,
> Et ferais à son nom moins d'honneur que d'outrage.

Delille. That sonnet of Malleville is very beautiful.

Landor. Particularly in the conclusion: yet your critics preferred, to this and every other, one which displays Phillis and Aurora and Zephyr and Olympus, and in which a most polite apology is offered to the Sun for the assertion that the brightness of Phillis was as much superior to his as his was superior to that of the stars. They who reason so profoundly seem to argue thus: if it requires more skill in a tailor to give a fashionable cut and fresh glossiness to an old court dress than to make a new one, it requires a better poet to refurbish a trite thought than to exhibit an original.

Dans les *nobles douceurs* d'un séjour *plein de charmes*
Tu n'es pas moins héros qu'au milieu des alarmes.

In the second line another equivocation! It is perfectly true that he was just as much a hero abed and asleep as in battle; but his heroism was chiefly displayed in these *nobles douceurs*. Pity that Boileau has written no ode on his marriage with a poor peasant girl, whom he met while he was hunting. The Virgin Mary would perhaps have been bridemaid, and Apollo would have presented the Gospel on which he swore. How many of your most glorious kings would, if they had been private men in any free country, or even in their own, have been condemned to the pillory and the galleys!

De ton trône agrandi portant seul tout le faix.

This is the favorite metaphor of your poet: he ought to have known that kings do not carry the burden of thrones, but that thrones carry theirs; and that consequently the metaphor here is not only inelegant, as usual, but imperfect and misapplied.

J'amasse de tes faits le pénible volume.

Again equivocation! In turning over the leaves to arrive at the *Art Poètique*, my eye rests on this verse in the twelfth Epistle:—

Qui n'eut jamais pour dieu que glace . . .

A strange God enough! It is not to be wondered at if there should be no other in his company: but there is. Who?

. . . et que froideur.

There are follies on which it would be a greater folly to remark. Who would have the courage to ask whether there is not coldness where there is ice? A Latin poet however has written almost as ill:—

Alpes
Frigidus aerias atque alta cacumina.

Read the first lines in the *Art Poètique*:

C'est en vain qu'au Parnasse un *téméraire auteur*
Pense de l'art des vers atteindre la *hauteur*.

Auteur answers to *hauteur*. After this fashion an echo is the most accomplished of rhymers.[34]

S'il ne sent point du ciel l'influence secrète.

In that case he is not *téméraire*, and the epithet is worse than useless.

Fuyez de ces auteurs l'abondance stérile,
Et ne vous chargez point d'un détail inutile.

The first verse forestalls the second, which is flat; and the three following are worse.

Ou le Temps qui s'enfuit . . . *une horloge à la main.*

He thinks it unreasonable that such an allegory should be censured. Time ought to be represented with no modern inventions to designate him. I presume M. Boileau means the *hour-glass* by his "horloge à la main;" but although we often see in prints an allegorical figure of this description, no poet should think that a sufficient reason for adopting it, but rather (if a better were wanting) for its rejection. An *hour-glass* in the hand of this mighty and awful power is hardly less ridiculous than a watch and seals.

Soyez vif et pressé dans vos narrations,
Soyez riche et *pompeux* dans vos descriptions.

I know not which to call the worse, the lines or the advice.

[34 This criticism shows that the critic was ignorant of the nature of French rhyme; of which to French ears auteur and hauteur form the most harmonious kind. Much of the criticism also indicates that Landor's pronunciation of French was faulty. He is apparently unable to distinguish between the sounds "eu" and "u," between "an," "in," "en," and "un."]

But to recommend a man to be *rich* in any thing is a hint that cannot always be taken, as we poets know better than most men.

J'aime mieux Arioste et ses fables comiques
Que ces auteurs toujours froids et mélancoliques.

Really! This he intends as a *pis-aller*. Ariosto is a plagiary, the most so of all poets; Ariosto is negligent; his plan inartificial, defective, bad: but divide the *Orlando* into three parts, and take the worst of them, and, although it may contain a large portion of extremely vile poetry, it will contain more of good than the whole French language. M.[35] de Voltaire, like M. Boileau, spoke flippantly and foolishly of Ariosto: he afterward gave his reasons for having done it.

Delille. I do not remember them at present. Were they at all satisfactory, or at least ingenious?

Landor. They were very good ones indeed, and exactly such as might have been expected from a critic of his spirit and quickness.

Delille. Do you recollect the sum of them?

Landor. He had never read him! To make amends, he took him kindly by the hand, and preferred him to Dante.

Delille. He might have held back there. But where we have dirtied one shoe we may dirty the other: it does not cost a farthing more to clean a pair than an odd one. When, however, not contented with making the grasshopper so loud as to deafen the vales and mountains, Ariosto makes her deafen the sea and heavens, he says rather too much on this worst pest of Italy, this neutralizer of the nightingale.

Cicala col noioso metro
Fra i densi rami del fronzuto stelo
Le valli e i monti *assorda*, e 'l mar e 'l cielo.

Landor. If he rises too high in one quarter, he falls in another too low. He speaks of Cardinal Ippolito di Este:

magnanimo, sublime . . .
Gran cardinal della chiesa di Roma!!

Since I love Ariosto next to Boccaccio, I am sorry at the discovery we have made together, that the two greatest personages

[35 From "M. de" to "worse" (29 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

in his *Orlando* are a cardinal and a grasshopper. But come along: we must go further, and may fare worse.

> Mais aussi pardonnez, si, plein de ce beau zèle,
> De tous vos pas *fameux* observateur fidèle,
> Quelquefois du bon or je sépare le faux.

What has *gold* to do, false or sterling, with *steps*, *zeal*, and *observation?* And [36] does he mean to say that there is *false gold* in the *steps* of King Louis? This is surely what the *faithful observer* would not wish to render *famous*, in the midst of a panegyric! *Fameux*, I must remark, is a very favorite expression with him, and is a very unpoetical one. Poetry is the voice of Fame, and celebrates, not what is famous, but what deserves to be. Of this Boileau is ignorant. He uses the same epithet at the beginning of the *Lutrin*:—

> Et toi, *fameux* héros, dont la sage entremise
> De ce schisme naissant débarrassa l'Eglise,
> Viens d'un regard heureux *animer mon projet*,
> Et garde-toi de rire en si grave sujet.

The last advice suffocated any nascent facetiousness. To *animate a project* is nonsense.

> Et de longs traits de *feu* lui sortent par les *yeux*.

This is just as euphonious as the verse,—

> Ses écrits pleins de *feu* partout brillent aux *yeux*.

Another such is,—

> De ces ailes dans l'*air* secouant la pou*ssière*.

Another no less,—

> . . . Invisible en ce *lieu*
> Je ne pourrai donc plus être vu que de *Dieu*.

And another,—

> Là Xenophon dans l'*air* heurte contre un *La Serre*.

Here we come to the translation of Sappho's ode, in which all is wretchedly bad after the first stanza:—

> Je sens *de veine en veine* une subtile flamme
> Courir *par tout mon corps*.

[36 From "And" to "panegyric" (4 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

Je ne *sçaurais trouver* de *langue* . . . ni de *voix*.
Un *nu*age con*fus* se répand sur ma *vue*.
Je n'entends *plus* . . . je tombe en de douces langueurs.

He had talked about *doux* transports two lines above.

Et pâle, sans haleine, *interdite*, *éperdue*.

This is contrary to the manner of Sappho, as praised by Longinus, and nothing can be more diffuse, more tautological, more prosaic.

You must have remarked, M. l'Abbé, that I have frequently turned over several pages together, and that Familiar, as you may call me, of the Holy Office, I never have invested my meagre and hollow-eyed delinquent with colors of flame and images of devils. Ridicule has followed the vestiges of Truth, but never usurped her place. I have said nothing of the original *Odes*, commiserating their helpless fatuity. Only throw a glance over that on the taking of Namur :—

Quelle *docte* et sainte *ivresse*
Aujourd'hui *me fait la loi?*

"*Docte* ivresse!" What violent absurdity!

Et par cent bouches *horribles*
L'airain sur ces monts *terribles*.
Dix mille vaillans Alcides.
C'est Jupiter en personne,
Ou c'est le vainqueur . . de Mons!
Saint-Omer, Besançon, Dôle,
Yprès, Mastricht, et Cambrai!!!
Accourez, Nassau, Bavière . . .

To do what?—

Considérer . . . *ces approches*
Louis à tout donnant l'âme,
Marcher, courir avec eux.

He might have marched with 'em, but he ran before 'em!

Son gouverneur, *qui se trouble*,
De corps morts, de rocs, de *briques*.

Here, I observe, the editor says, "le son de ces mots répond a ce qu'ils expriment." Pray, M. l'Abbé, which is the sound among them that resembles the dead bodies?

Delille. The odes of Boileau, I confess, are inferior to the choruses of Racine in *Athalie.*

Landor. Diffuse and feeble paraphrases from the Psalms! The best ode in your language is in the form of a sonnet by Gombaud,—

La voix qui retentit, &c.

Racine has stolen many things from Euripides: he has spoiled most of them, and injured all. The beautiful lines which Lucretius had before him in his description of Iphianassa are thus Frenchified:—

Fille d' Agamemnon, c'est moi qui la première
Vous appellai, Seigneur, *de ce doux nom de père*,

This reflection ought to come from the father, as in Lucretius, not from the daughter.[37]

The most admired verse of Racine,—

Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, &c.,—

is taken almost literally from Godeau. *Cher Abner* favors the theft. The line preceding is useless, and shows, as innumerable other instances do, his custom of making the first *for* the second, and *after* it. He has profited much from the neglected poets of your country, and wants energy because he wants originality. You pause, M. l'Abbé.

Delille. I cannot well believe that if Boileau, to say nothing of Racine, was a poet so faulty as you represent him, he would have escaped the censure of such sound critics and elegant writers as Johnson and Warton.

Landor. And poets, too; the former so powerful that he made the tempests sigh,—

"O'er the sad plains perpetual tempests sigh,"—

the latter, that he reduced flame to the temperature of new milk,—

"How *burnt* their bosoms with *warm* patriot flame!"

Delille. Well, what is amiss?

Landor. I perceive, my dear Abbé, that you slide easily on

[37 In Euripides the reflection comes from the daughter.]

the corruptions of our language. In fashionable life we say, "I am very *warm*," instead of, "I am very *hot*;" the expression is wrong. Warmth is temperate heat; we never say *red-warm*, but *red-hot*; never *burning-warm*, but *burning-hot*; we use a *warming-pan* for our beds, a *heater* of red-hot iron for our tea-urns. The epithet of *warm* applied to *flame* is worse than childish: for children speak as they feel; bad poets, from reminiscences and arrangements. Johnson had no feeling for poetry; and Warton was often led astray by a feverish and weak enthusiasm.

Delille.[38] Some of his observations are very just.

Landor. Others are trivial and superficial. He seldom demonstrates his objections, or ascends to the sources of his admiration. Johnson is practised in both; sometimes going wrong from an obliquity in his view of poetry, rarely from his ratiocination. Neither of them saw the falsity of Pope's inference at the commencement of the *Essay on Man*:—

> "Let us, since life can little more supply
> Than just to look around us and to die,
> Expatiate free o'er all this maze of man."

If human life is so extremely contracted, there is little encouragement to expatiate in all its maze, and little power to expatiate *freely*,—which can only mean *leisurely*, for freedom of will or purpose is not in question.

Delille. Johnson may not have been quite so learned as some whose celebrity is less; for I believe that London is worse furnished with public libraries of easy access than any city in Europe, not excepting Constantinople; and his private one, from his contracted circumstances, must have been scanty.

Landor. He was studious; but neither his weak eyes nor many other infirmities, on which a severe mental disquietude worked incessantly, would allow him all the reading he coveted: beside, he was both too poor and too wise to collect a large body of authors.

Delille. Ignorant men are often more ambitious than the learned of copious libraries and curious books, as the blind are

[38 From "*Delille*" to "question" (14 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

fonder of sunshine than the sighted. Surely the judgment of Johnson was correct, the style elegant.

Landor. I have spoken of his judgment[39] in poetry. In regard to elegance of style, it appears to me that a sentence of Johnson is like that article of dress which your nation has lately made peace with,—divided into two parts, equal in length, breadth, and substance, with a protuberance before and behind. Warton's essay on Pope is a cabinet of curiosities, in which are many trifles worth looking at, nothing to carry about or use.

Delille. That Racine and Boileau were great borrowers is undeniable.

Landor. And equally that they were in the habit of paying a small portion of the debt.

Delille. Even your immortal Shakspeare borrowed from others.

Landor. Yet he was more original than the originals. He breathed upon dead bodies and brought them into life.

Delille. I think, however, I can trace Caliban,—that wonderful creature,—when I survey attentively the Cyclops of Euripides.

Landor. He knew nothing of Euripides or his Cyclops. That poet, where he is irregular, is great; and he presents more shades and peculiarities of character than all other poets of antiquity put together. Yet in several scenes he appears to have written principally for the purpose of inculcating his political and moral axioms: almost every character introduces them, and in almost every place. There is a regular barter of verse for verse; no credit is given for a proverb, however threadbare; the exchange is paid on the nail for the commodity. The dogmas, like *valets de place*, serve any master and run to any quarter. Even when new, they nevertheless are miserably flat and idle: how different from the striking sentences employed unsparingly by Pindar, which always come recommended by some appropriate ornament![40] Virgil and Ovid have interspersed them with

[39 First ed. reads: "judgment; it was alike in all things. In," &c.]

[40 First ed. reads: "ornament like images on days of Festival in the temples. Virgil . . . them throughout their works with," &c. Three lines below, 1st ed. reads: "inartificial; and if in the chorus he assumes another form and becomes a more elevated poet, he is still at a loss to make it serve the interests of the piece. Wearied by his dialectics, and again refreshed by his chorus, I cannot," &c.]

equal felicity. The dialogue of Euripides is sometimes dull and heavy; the construction of his fable infirm and inartificial; and in the chorus I cannot but exclaim,—

"There be *two* Richards in the field to-day!"

Aristophanes, who ridicules him in his *Comedies*, treats him disdainfully as the competitor of Sophocles, and speaks probably the sense of the Athenians in the meridian of their literature. If, however, he was not considered by them as the equal of Sophocles in dramatic power, or in the continuous strain of poetical expression, yet sensible men in all ages will respect him, and the more because they fancy they discover in him greater wisdom than others have discovered: for while many things in his tragedies are direct, and many proverbial, others are illusive and vague, occurring in various states of mind and temperatures of feeling. There is little of the theatrical in his works; and his characters are more anxious to show their understanding than their sufferings.

Euripides came down farther into common life than Sophocles, and he farther down than Æschylus: one would have expected the reverse. But the marvellous had carried Æschylus from the earth, and he filled with light the whole region in which he rested. The temperate greatness and pure eloquence of Pericles formed the moral constitution of Sophocles, who had exercised with him a principal magistracy in the republic; and the demon of Socrates, not always unimportunate, followed Euripides from the school to the theatre. The decencies of the *boudoir* were unknown to him: he would have shocked your chambermaids. Talthybius calls Polyxena a calf; her mother had done the same; and Hercules, in *Alcestis*, is drunk.

Delille. This is horrible, if true. Virgil (to venture no thing further about Racine), Virgil is greatly more judicious in his Dido.

Landor. The passion of Dido is always true to Nature. Other women have called their lovers cruel; she calls Æneas so, not chiefly for betraying and deserting her, but for hazarding his life by encountering the tempests of a wintry sea:

"Even if it were not to foreign lands and unknown habitations that you were hastening, even if Troy were yet in existence and you were de-

stined thither, would you chose a season like this? Would you navigate a sea of which you are ignorant, under the stars of winter?"

I must repeat the lines, for the sake of proposing an improvement:—

> Quinetiam *hyberno* moliris sidere classem,
> Et mediis properas aquilonibus ire per altum.
> Crudelis! quod si non arva aliena domosque
> Ignotas peteres, et Troja antiqua maneret,
> Troja per *undosum* peteretur classibus æquor?

If *hybernum* were substituted for *undosum*, how incomparably more beautiful would the sentence be for this energetic repetition!

Delille.[41] Adjectives ending with *osus* express abundance and intensity to such a degree that some learned men derive the termination from *odi*, the most potent and universal of feelings.

Landor. If it be so, *famosus*, *jocosus*, *nemorosus*, *fabulosus*, *sabulosus*, &c., must have been a later brood.

Undosum, with all its force, would be far from an equivalent for *hybernum*, even if the latter held no fresh importance from apposition.

My admiration of the author of the *Æneid*, as you see, is not inferior to yours; but I doubt whether he has displayed *on the whole* such poetical powers as the author of *Alcestis*, who excels in variety and peculiarity of character all[42] the ancient poets. He has invented, it is true, nothing so stupendous nor so awful as the Prometheus: but who has? The Satan of Milton himself sinks below it; for Satan, if he sometimes appears with the gloomy grandeur of a fallen angel, and sometimes as the antagonist of Omnipotence, is often a thing to be thrown out of the way, among the rods and foolscaps of the nursery.

Virgil[43] is not so vigorous as Lucretius, so elegant and graceful as Catullus, so imaginative and diversified as Ovid. All their powers united could not have composed the *Æneid;* but in the *Æneid* there is nothing so epic as the contest of Ulysses and Ajax in the *Metamorphoses*. This, in my opinion, is the most wonderful thing in the whole range of Latin poetry; for it

[41 "*Delille*" added in 3rd ed.]
[42 First ed reads: "all poets excepting Shakespeare. He," &c.]
[43 From "Virgil" to "contrary" (53 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

unites (what appears incompatible) two pieces of pleading, never excelled by Roman or Athenian orator, with exquisitely discriminated characters and unparalleled heroic composition. The *Iliad* itself has nothing in the *contentional* so interesting or so animated. When Ajax hath ended, who can doubt of his having gained the cause? Ulysses rises, slowly, modestly; and our enthusiasm subsides just sufficiently to allow him a patient hearing. By degrees he engages, moves, and almost convinces us. At last, when we hesitate and waver, he displays the Palladium before us; and we are gained by that which gained the city, by that which terminates our toils, by that which restores to us our country and our home.

Delille. Ah! you fancy yourself among them. You should have been there.

Landor. I was; I am: I have been often, and shall be often yet. Let me escape for a moment from the soapsuds of the Seine, and plunge into the Scamander.

Delille. There are fine speeches, and speeches as long sustained, on our stage.

Landor. So much the worse. But in those four hundred lines (such I think is about the quantity) four should be omitted.

Delille. Which are they?

Landor.

> Perque deos oro quos hosti nuper ademi,
> Per si quid superest, si quid sapienter *agendum*,
> Si quid adhuc audax ex precipitique *petendum*,
> Si Trojæ *fatis* aliquid restare *putatis*.

Delille. I see the reason: he rhymes.

Landor. He falls oftener into this fault than any other of the ancients. I would, however, that the four lines were omitted, not only for this but for different reasons. First, after winning his auditors by his modesty, he speaks too much and too directly of his courage and sagacity; secondly, and chiefly, in mentioning the gods he had taken from the enemy, he weakens the effect. Enough was said and done already, by holding out the Palladium, and crying, *Huic date!* By this pause he had attained sublimity. There are rhymes, perhaps not unintentional, in Lucretius and in Virgil. Similar sounds at stated distances, although they offend us in the terminations of Greek and Latin verse, occur with ad-

mirable power in the most impassioned sentences of Demosthenes and Cicero.

Delille. Surely, you would never set up Ovid for the imitation or improvement of our young poets in preference to Virgil?

Landor. Quite the contrary. I wish Virgil, in particular, were followed by our juvenile sweepers of the Haram: he might be without diminution of their grace or strength. Indeed he has been once, in the riddle,—

> Dic quibus in terris (et eris mihi magnus Apollo)
> Tres pateat *cæli* spatium non amplius ulnas.

The family of Cœlius, you know, was of Verona; and occasionally, it is probable, a visitant of Mantua. He upon whose tomb the ingenuity of Menalcas was about to be exercised is perhaps the same to whom, fifteen years before, Catullus addressed two of his lighter compositions. Now, Abbé,

> "Know you the land,
> Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
> And the voice of the nightingale never is mute?" [44]

Delille. Out upon it! I have it: a grocer's shop kept by one Nightingale. It cannot be otherwise; for olives and citrons in their natural state are ugly enough, but preserved and pickled they fairly beat almonds, raisins, figs, pistachios, and prunes.

Landor. I have heard the paradox that the author intended no enigma.

Delille. His enemies and rivals may assert it.

Landor. They declare that he really means Turkey.

Delille. Ha! ha! ha! spiteful rogues! If it were indeed not a man's house, but a region of the earth, it must be one where there is no peach, apricot, plum, raspberry, strawberry, cranberry, cherry, grape, currant, or crab; and I conceive that in such a situation there can hardly be citron or olive. The nightingale sings for a shorter season than any other bird; his song continues few weeks, and there is something in it like the happiness of man before the Fall: vivid and exuberant, but melancholy from its solitude, and from the shades that we perceive are closing on it.

Landor. You have earned your release from doubt. What-

[44 Byron's "Bride of Abydos."]

ever was the poet's first intention, he himself now declares that he has no concern in Nightingale's shop, that his idea is not borrowed from Virgil, and that the land, upon his faith,

"Is the clime of the East, is the land of the Sun."

Delille. Pray which? A pleasant release from doubt!— a release like a push given by a jailer to his prisoner in the cell, with a cry of *Get out you rogue!* as he turns the key upon him.

Landor. We may observe that, really,

"The voice of the nightingale never is mute."

Delille. O yes, surely. I am supported by Buffon.

Landor. Songs may be mute! for songs may exist unsung; but voices exist only while they sound. In the same poem I find that,—

"If aught his lips *essay'd* to groan,
The rushing billows choked the tone."

They need not take the trouble: I will answer for lips doing no harm in the way of groaning, let them *essay* it as long as they list.

We have in England, at the present time, many poets far above what was formerly thought mediocrity; but our national taste begins to require excitement. Our poems must contain *strong things;* we call for essences, not for flowers; we run across from the old grove and soft meadow into the ruined abbey, the Albanian fortress, and the sultan's garden; we cut down our oaks and plant cypresses; we reprove our children for not calling a *rose* a *gul;* we kick the first shepherd we meet, and shake hands with the first cut-throat; we are resolved to excite tears, but we conjure them forth at the point of the dagger; and, if they come slower than we wish, we bully and blaspheme.

Nothing[45] is easier than to catch the air of originality now blowing: do not wonder that it pleases the generality. You and I perhaps have stopped, like the children and the servants, to look at a fine transparency on a staircase, while many who call themselves professors have passed a Raphael by, and have never noticed it. Let us censure no one for being easily pleased, but let *us* do

[45] In 1st and 2nd eds. this paragraph is spoken by Delille.]

the best we can. Whenever I find a critic or satirist vehement against the writers of his age and country, I attribute more of his inspiration to vanity than to malignity, much as I may observe of this. No good writer was ever long neglected; no great man overlooked by men equally great. Impatience is a proof of inferior strength, and a destroyer of what little there may be. Whether, think you, would Shakspeare be amused or mortified, if he were sitting in the pit during the performance of his best tragedy, and heard no other exclamation from one beside him than, "How beautifully those scenes are painted! what palaces, waterfalls, and rocks!"

Delille.[46] I wish he were more dramatic.

Landor. You would say, more observant of certain rules established for one species of the drama. Never was poet so dramatic, so intelligent of stage-effect. I do not defend his anachronisms, nor his confusion of modern customs with ancient; nor do I willingly join him when I find him with Hector and Aristoteles, arm-in-arm, among knights, esquires, and fiddlers. But our audiences and our princes in those days were resolved that all countries and all ages should be subservient at once, and perceived no incongruity in bringing them together.

Delille. Yet what argument can remove the objection made against your poet, of introducing those who in the first act are children, and grown-up men in the last?

Landor. Such a drama I would not call by the name of tragedy; nevertheless it is a drama, and a very beautiful species of it. Delightful in the first degree are those pieces of history in verse and action, as managed by Shakspeare.

Delille. We must contend against them; we must resist all barbarous inroads on classic ground, all innovations and abuses.

Landor. You fight against your own positions. Such a work is to tragedy what a forest is to a garden. Those alone are wrong who persist in calling it a garden rather than a forest; who find oaks instead of tulips; who look about the hills and dales, the rocks and precipices, the groves and waterfalls, for flues and balusters and vases, and smooth marble steps and shepherdesses in hoops and satin. There are some who think these things as

[46] From "*Delille*" to "each" (49 lines) added in 3rd ed. First ed reads: "rocks. *Landor.* He, whose," &c.]

unnatural as that children should grow into men, and that we should live to see it.

Delille. Live to see it!—but in one day or night!

Landor. The same events pass before us within the same space of time whenever we look into history.

Delille. Ay, but here they act.

Landor. So they do there, unless the history is an English one. And, indeed, the histories of our country read by Shakspeare held human life within them. When we are interested in the boy, we spring forward to the man with more than a poet's velocity. We would interrogate the oracles; we would measure the thread around the distaff of the Fates: yet we quarrel with him who knows and tells us all.

Glory to thee in the highest, thou confidant of our Creator! who alone hast taught us in every particle of the mind how wonderfully and fearfully we are made.

Delille. Voltaire was indeed too severe upon him.

Landor. Severe? Is it severity to throw a crab or a pincushion at the Farnese Hercules or the Belvedere Apollo? It is folly, perverseness, and impudence in poets and critics like Voltaire, whose best composition in verse is a hard mosaic, sparkling and superficial, of squares and parallelograms, one speck each. He, whose poems are worth all that have been composed from the creation to the present hour, was so negligent or so secure of fame as to preserve no copy of them. Homer and he confided to the hearts of men the treasures of their genius, which were, like conscience, unengraved words. A want of sedulity, at least in claiming the property of thoughts, is not among the deficiencies of our modern poets. Some traveller, a little while ago, was so witty as to call Venice Rome; not indeed the Rome of the Tiber, but the Rome of the sea. A poet, warm with keeping up the ball from gazette to gazette, runs instantly to the printers, out of breath at so glorious an opportunity of perpetuating his fame, and declares to all Europe that he had called Venice Rome the year before. We now perceive, but too late for the laurel which they merited, what prodigious poets were your Marat and Bonaparte and Robespierre, with whom England one day was Tyre, another day Carthage, and Paris the Rome of the Seine.

Delille.[47] The most absurd imitation of Antiquity I can remember anywhere is in Stay's *Modern Philosophy.** He had found in Virgil the youths and maidens carried on their biers before the faces of their parents; and he makes those of England *hang themselves* before them. He was unaware that the parents might cut them down, or that the young people could think it likely.

> Ergo, quæ jubeant prædura incommoda, vitam
> Exsolvunt letho; seu ferrum in viscera condunt,
> Seu se præcipites in *flumen*, in *æquora* mittunt,
> Seu potius laqueo innexo suspendere *gaudent*
> Se manibus *persæpe* suis *ante ora parentum*.
>
> Lib. iij.

Landor. We have wandered (and conversation would be tedious unless we did occasionally) far from the subject: but I have not forgotten our Cyclops and Caliban. The character of the Cyclops is somewhat broad and general, but worthy of Euripides, and such as the greatest of Roman poets was incapable of conceiving; that of Caliban is peculiar and stands single: it is admirably imagined and equally well sustained. Another poet would have shown him spiteful: Shakspeare has made the infringement of his idleness the origin of his malice. He has also made him grateful; but then his gratitude is the return for an indulgence granted to his evil appetites. Those who by nature are grateful are often by nature vindictive: one of these properties is the sense of kindness, the other of unkindness. Religion and comfort require that the one should be cherished, and that the other should be suppressed. The mere conception of the monster without these qualities, without the sudden impression which bring them vividly out, and the circumstances in which they are displayed, would not be to considerate minds so stupendous as it appeared to Warton, who little knew that there is a *nil admirari* as requisite to wisdom as to happiness.

Delille.[48] And yet how enthusiastic is your admiration of Shakspeare!

[47] From "*Delille*" to "Lib iij." (12 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

* Praised, and perhaps read, by Coleridge.

[48] From "Delille" to "pages" (12 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

Landor.

"He lighted with his golden lamp on high
The unknown regions of the human heart,
Show'd its bright fountains, show'd its rueful wastes,
Its shoals and headlands; and a tower he rais'd
Refulgent, where eternal breakers roll,
For all to see, but no man to approach."

The creation of Caliban, wonderful as it is, would excite in me less admiration than a single sentence, or a single sentiment, such as I find in fifty of his pages.

No new fiction of a supernatural being exists in poetry. Hurd traces the genealogy of the Fairies, and fancied he made a discovery: the Sylphs have only another name. Witches and wizards and giants, apparently powerful agents, generally prove the imbecility of the author who has any thing to do with them. Dragons and demons awaken our childish fancies, some of which remain with us to the last. Dreams perhaps generated them, superstition presented them with names and attributes, and the poet brings them forth into action.

Take your Boileau. Some morning, when we are both of us quite at leisure, I will engage (if I have not done it already) to make out a full hundred of puerilities in your grave, concise, elegant poet. At[49] present I have nothing more to say, than that he never elevates the mind, he never warms or agitates the heart, he inspires no magnanimity, no generosity, no tenderness. What then is he worth? A smile from Louis.

Delille. There are excellences, my friend, in Boileau, of which you cannot judge so correctly as a native can: for instance his versification.

Landor. I would not creep into the secrets of a versification upon which even you, M. Delille, can ring no changes: a machine which must be regularly wound up at every six syllables, and the construction of which is less artificial than that of a cuckoo-clock. The greater part of the heroic verses in your language may be read with more facility as anapestic than as iambic: there is not a syllable which may not become either short or long, however it usually be pronounced in conversation. The secret of conciseness I know and will communicate to you, so

[[49] From "At" to "Louis" (4 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

that you may attain it in the same manner and with the same facility as Boileau and Voltaire hath done.

Delille. Indeed it costs me infinite pains, and I almost suspect I have sometimes failed.

Landor. Well then, in future you may be master of it without any pains at all. Do what they did. Throw away the little links and hinges, the little cramps and dovetails, which lay upon the tables of Homer and of Virgil, which were adjusted with equal nicety by Cicero, Plato, and Demosthenes, and were not overlooked by Bossuet and Pascal; then dock the tail of your commas, and behold a period!

The French are convinced that all poetry, to be quite perfect, must be theirs or like it, and remark the obligations that Milton lay under to the Abbé Delille, and Shakspeare to Voltaire. Next in vanity is the declaration of a writer on heraldry, that Raphael, Correggio, and Leonardo were incapable of painting a *fleur de lis*, and that none but a Frenchman by birth and *courage* could arrive at this summit of glory!

"J'estime qu'il est fort difficile, de bien faire et représenter une fleur de lis *mignonnement troussée*, qui n'est peintre excellent et Français *de nation et de courage:* car un Allemand, un Anglais, Espagnol, et Italien, n'en sçauront *venir à son honneur*, pour le bien proportionner."—*Théâtre d'Honneur*, par Fauyn, b. 2, c. 6, p. 185.

What is called a *fleur de lis* is in fact a spear-head. Chifflet wrote a treatise to prove that it was a *bee*. Joannes Ferrandus Aniciensis composed an *Epinicion pro liliis*. It is wonderful that painters of such courage left any doubt whether what they had drawn so accurately were a flower, a spear-head, or a bee! Before the controversy the Florentines used the *iris* as the symbol of their city; it being indigenous, its root very fragrant, and used in flavoring wine. We call it *orris*, corruptly.

The good Abbé Delille entertained a high esteem for Milton, but felt that Adam and Eve, Michael and Satan, could not be *mignonnment troussés* unless by the hand of a Parisian.

V. MIDDLETON AND MAGLIABECHI.[1]

Magliabechi. The pleasure I have enjoyed in your conversation, sir, induces me to render you such a service as never yet was rendered by an Italian to a stranger.

[1] The date of Middleton's visit to Italy was between the years 1726 and 1729, in which he published his "Letter from Rome," containing an

Middleton. You have already rendered me several such, M. Magliabechi; nor, indeed, can any man of letters converse an hour with you and not carry home with him some signal benefit.

Magliabechi. Your life is in danger, Mr Middleton.

Middleton. How! impossible! I offend no one, in public or in private: I converse with you only: I avoid all others; and, above all, the busy-bodies of literature and politics. I court no lady: I never go to the palace: I enjoy no favors: I solicit no distinctions: I am neither poet nor painter. Surely then I, if any one, should be exempt from malignity and revenge.

Magliabechi. To remove suspense, I must inform you that your letters are opened, and your writings read by the police. The servant whom you dismissed for robbery has denounced you.

Middleton. Was it not enough for him to be permitted to plunder me with impunity? Does he expect a reward for this villany? Will his word or his oath be taken?

Magliabechi. Gently, Mr Middleton. He expects no reward: he received it when he was allowed to rob you. He came recommended to you as an honest servant, by several noble families. He robbed them all: and a portion of what he stole was restored to them by the police, on condition that they should render to the Government a mutual service when called upon.

Middleton. Incredible baseness! Can you smile at it, M. Magliabechi! Can you have any communication with these wretches,—these nobles, as you call them,—this servant, this police!

attack upon Roman Catholicism, which is, however, capable of more extended application. Magliabechi, the founder of the Ducal Library of Florence, died in the year 1714. The circumstances described in this Conversation are therefore "Imaginary." There is nothing in the published works of Middleton to show that he doubted the efficacy of prayer. The "Biographie Universelle" states that he left behind him a manuscript treatise on this subject intended to be published posthumously. Dr Heberden, the translator of Cicero's letters, purchased it from Mrs Middleton and burned it. Vol. i., 1824. Vol. ii., 1826. Works, i., 1846. Works, iv., 1876.]

Magliabechi. My opinion was demanded by my superiors upon some remarks of yours on the religion of our country.

Middleton. I protest, sir, I copied them in great measure from the Latin work of a learned German.*

Magliabechi. True; I know the book: it is entitled *Facetiæ Facetiarum.* There is some wit and some truth in it; but the better wit is, the more dangerous is it; and truth, like the sun, coming down on us too directly, may give us a brain-fever.

In this country, Mr Middleton, we have *jalousies* not only to our windows but to our breasts: we admit but little light to either, and we live the more comfortably for so doing. If we changed this custom, we must change almost every other; all the parts of our polity having been gradually drawn closer and closer, until at last they form an inseparable mass of religion, laws, and usages. For instance, we condemn as a dangerous error the doctrine of Galileo, that the earth moves about the sun; but we condemn rather the danger than the error of asserting it.

Middleton. Pardon my interruption. When I see the doctors of your church insisting on a demonstrable falsehood, have I not reason to believe that they would maintain others less demonstrable, and more profitable? All[2] questions of politics, of morals, and of religion ought to be discussed; but principally should it be examined whether our eternal happiness depends on any speculative point whatever; and secondly, whether those speculative points on which various nations insist as necessary to it are well or ill-founded. I would rather be condemned for believing that to kill an ibis is a sin, than for thinking that to kill a man is not. Yet the former opinion is ridiculed by all modern nations, while the murder of men by thousands is no crime, providing they be flourishing and happy, or will probably soon become so; for then they may cause discontent in other countries, and

* Perhaps he may also have cast a glance on *Les Conformités des Cérémonies modernes avec les Anciennes*, of Jean de Croi; and, although he was less likely to acknowledge where it was less likely to be detected, he might have added that the whole idea and much of the substance of his *Letter from Rome* was taken from a passage in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy.* All the remainder may be found in Josiah Stopford's *Pagano-Papismus.*

[2 From "All" to "quietly" (13 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

indeed are likely to excite the most turbulence when they sit down together the most quietly.

Magliabechi. Let[3] us rather keep within the tenets of our church.

Middleton. Some of them are important, some are not; and some appeared so in one age of the church, which were cast aside in another.

Magliabechi. Pray which were they?

Middleton. She now worships the blessed Virgin Mary: anciently she condemned the Collyridians for doing it, and called them heretics. Was she infallible then; or is she now? Infants were formerly admitted by her to the Eucharist, and she declared that they could not be saved without it: she now decrees that the doctrine is false. Formerly it was her belief that, before the destruction of the world, Christ should reign upon earth a thousand years, and the saints under him: at present she has no mind that either of them should be so near her. Although there are many things wherein much may be said on both sides, yet it is only on one side in any question that the same thing can be said.

Magliabechi. This is specious, and delivered temperately.

Middleton. Saint Augustine is esteemed among the infallible?

Magliabechi. Certainly; and with justice.

Middleton. He declares that the dead, even saints, are ignorant what the living do; even their own children; for the souls of the dead, he says, *interfere not in the affairs of the living.**

Magliabechi. This is strong; but divines can reconcile it with religion.

Middleton. What can they not?

Magliabechi. I will tell you what they cannot: and it is this on which I began our conversation.

Among your other works I find a manuscript on the inefficacy of prayer. I defended you to my superiors, by remarkng that Cicero had asserted things incredible to himself merely for the sake of argument, and had probably written them before he had fixed in his mind the personages to whom they should be attributed

[3] From "Let" to "conversation" (28 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

* Nesciunt mortui, etiam sancti, quid agant vivi, etiam eorum fillii; quia animæ mortuorum rebus viventium non intersunt. *De Curâ pro Mortuis.*

in his dialogues; that, in short, they were brought forward for no other purpose than discussion and explosion. This impiety was forgiven. But every man in Italy has a favorite saint, for whose honor he deems it meritorious to draw (I had almost said the sword) the stiletto.

Middleton. It would be safer to attempt dragging God from his throne than to split a spangle on their petticoats, or to puff a grain of powder from their wigs: this I know. Nothing in my writings is intended to wound the jealousy of the Italians. Truth, like the juice of the poppy, in small quantities calms men; in larger, heats and irritates them, and is attended by fatal consequences in its excess. For which reason, with plain ground before me, I would not expatiate largely; and I often made an argument, that offered itself, give way altogether and leave room for inferences. My treatise on prayer was not to be published in my lifetime.

Magliabechi. And why at any time? Supposing prayer to be totally inefficacious in the object, is not the mind exalted, the heart purified, are not our affections chastened, our desires moderated, our enjoyments enlarged by this intercourse with the Deity? And are not men the better, as certainly they are the happier, for a belief that he interferes in their concerns? They are persuaded that there is something conditional between them, and that, if they labor under the commission of crimes, their voice will be inaudible as the voice of one under the nightmare.

Middleton. I wished to demonstrate that we often treat God in the same manner as we should treat some doting or some passionate old man: we feign, we flatter, we sing, we cry, we gesticulate.

Magliabechi. Worship him in your own manner, according to the sense he has given you; and let those who cannot exercise that sense rely upon those who can. Be convinced, Mr Middleton, that you never will supplant the received ideas of God; be no less convinced that the sum of your labors in this field will be to leave the ground loose beneath you, and that he who comes after you will sink. In sickness, in our last particularly, we all are poor wretches; we are nearly all laid on a level by it: the dry-rot of the mind supervenes, and loosens whatever was fixed

in it, except religion. Would you be so inhuman as to tell a friend in this condition not to be comforted? Would you prove to him that the crucifix, which his wandering eye finds at last its resting-place, is of the same material as his bedpost? Suppose[4] a belief in the efficacy of prayer to be a belief altogether irrational, —you may: I never can,—suppose it to be insanity itself, would you, meeting a young man who had wandered over many countries in search of a father until his intellects are deranged, and who in the fulness of his heart addresses an utter stranger as the lost parent, clings to him, kisses him, sobs upon his breast, and finds comfort only by repeating *father! father!* would you, Mr Middleton, say to this affectionate fond creature, *Go home, sit quiet, be silent!* and persuade him that his father is lost to him?

Middleton. God forbid!

Magliabechi. You have done it: do it no more. The madman has not heard you; and the father will pardon you when you meet.

Middleton. Far be it from my wishes and from my thoughts to unhinge those portals through which we must enter to the performance of our social duties; but I am sensible of no irreligion, I acknowledge no sorrow or regret, in having attempted to demonstrate that God is totally and far removed from our passions and infirmities, and[5] that whatever seems fit to him will never seem unfit in consequence of our entreaties. I would inculcate entire resignation to the divine decrees, acquiescence in the divine wisdom, confidence in the divine benevolence. There is something of frail humanity, something of its very decrepitude, in our ideas of God; we are foolish and ignorant in the same manner, and almost to the same degree, as those painters are who append a grey beard to his chin, draw wrinkles across his brow, and cover him with a gaudy and flowing mantle.[6]

Our Saviour does not command us to pray, although his ex-

[4 From "Suppose" to "meet" (14 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

[5 From "and" to "entreaties" (2 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

[6 First ed. reads: "mantle. I admit the benefit and necessity of enuring the mind to repose upon the contemplation of the divine perfections, and to purify itself by looking upwards to the purity of heaven: but I see neither wisdom nor piety in the prayers of your Capuchins and their besotted hearers to God and his Saints for a Parmesan cheese, or a new pair of breeches. *Magliabechi.* Prayer at all times," &c.; (138 lines below.)]

ample, for especial purposes, appears to countenance it. His nature, and the nature of his mission, might require this intercourse. He says only, "When ye pray," &c.; or in other words, "If you will pray, let your prayer be," &c. For on more than one occasion, desirous as he was of interfering but little with established usages, he condemned the prayers of the Jews.

Magliabechi. They were too long.

Middleton. They were not longer (as far as I know) than those of other nations.* In short, if we believe the essence of God to be immutable, we must believe his will to be so. It is insanity to imagine that his determination can be altered by our whims or wishes; therefore it is not only more wise but also more reverent to suppress them, both in action and in speech. Supposing him altered or moved by us, we suppose him subject to our own condition. If he pardons, he corrects his first judgment; he owns himself to have been wrong and hasty,—than which supposition what impiety can be greater?

Magliabechi. Do you question every thing that is not in the form of syllogism, or enthymema, or problem with corollary and solution?

Middleton. I never said that what is indemonstrable must therefore be untrue; but whatever is indemonstrable may be questioned, and, if important, should be. We are not to tremble at the shaking of weak minds: Reason does not make them so; she, like Virtue, is debilitated by indulgences, and sickened to death by the blasts of heat and cold blown alternately from your church.

Magliabechi. Do you conceive God then to be indifferent to our virtues or vices, our obstinacy or repentance?

Middleton. I would not enter into such questions; and indeed I have always been slow to deliver my more serious opinions in conversation, feeling how inadequately any great subject must be discussed within such limits, and how presumptuous it would

* Middleton had the misfortune to disbelieve the efficacy of prayer, and adduces such arguments in support of his opinion as a reasoner so powerful in his perversity would do. Magliabechi is unable to seize the horns of his adversary and bring him at once to the ground; yet the goodness of his cause supplies him with generous and high feeling, and his appeal to the heart of Middleton is more forcible than Middleton's reasoning.

appear, in one like me, to act as if I had collected all that could be said, or even what could be said best, on the occasion. Neither to run against nor to avoid your interrogatory: there are probably those who believe that, in the expansion and improvement of our minds hereafter, they will be so sensitive to the good or evil we have done on earth as to be rewarded or punished in the most just proportion, without any impulse given to, or suffered by, the First Cause and sole Disposer of things and of events. How rational may be this creed, I leave with the other to speculative men; wishing them to recollect that unseasonable and undue heat must warp the instrument by which alone their speculations can be becomingly and rightly made. If God is sensible to displeasure (which is a modification of pain) at the faults or vices of his creatures, he must suffer at once a myriad times more of it than any of them, and he must endure the same sufferings a myriad times longer.

Magliabechi. This hurts our common faith.

Middleton. Pass over what may offend your faith, common or private; mind only (which I am sure you will do) what may disturb the clearness of your conscience, and impede the activity of your benevolence. Let us never say openly what may make a good man unhappy or unquiet, unless it be to warn him against what we know will make him more so: for instance, if you please, a false friend; or, if you would rather, a teacher who, while he pretends to be looking over the lesson, first slips his hand into his scholar's pocket, then ties him adroitly to his chair by the coat-skirt, then running off with his book tells him to cry out if he dares, promises at last to give him ten better, and if he should be hungry and thirsty bids him never to mind it, for he will eat his dinner for him and drink his wine, and say a Latin grace.

Magliabechi.[7] Ha! now you are stretching out your objections against our church, disregarding what Catholics and Protestants hold in common: our prayers, for instance. I have always found that, when we have carried off the mysteries in triumph, you fall foul upon our miracles and our saints.

Middleton. That is idle.

Magliabechi. I am rejoiced to hear you confess it! You

[7 From "*Magliabechi*" to "*Middleton*" (61 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

then really have some veneration for those holy men whom the Church hath appointed for our intercessors?

Middleton. Here we come again into the open road, with visible objects before us. I venerate all holy men; but, doubting whether my own prayers to God would alter his mind concerning me, I should yet more betray my deficiency of confidence in his promises, if I trusted a person who is no relative to him rather than his only son; that is, if I trusted the weaker in preference to the stronger, the worse in preference to the better, him who at his birth and after his birth had sins, to him who was born and lived and died with none. Beside, I have no proof whatever that God requires such counsellors and mediators. Must we believe that some men are lying in the grave while others are conversing with him, and busied in turning him from indignation to mercy? We are informed by Holy Writ that all alike are to be awakened by sound of trumpet. What then would become of me if I doubted it? And must I not doubt it if I suppose that some are already at the right hand of God?

Magliabechi. His divine will may order it. We know he promised the repentant thief on the cross that he should sup with him that night in Paradise.

Middleton. He was very merciful to that thief, and has been to many since, who never were upon the cross at all, but who picked pockets under it. What he promised it would be impiety to doubt of his performing; but I never heard of his promise of supper or Paradise to deacon or doctor, to canon or bishop; much less do I believe that they can introduce a friend or dependent. If you would be consistent and go upon certainty, you would pray to the thief; for beyond all controversy he hath secured his place.

Magliabechi. The Church has never canonized him.

Middleton. What! have saints no sanctity until the Church hath given it? Do they mount into heaven from the Vatican? God then does not appoint his own counsellors! They are nominated like the cardinals, and by the same voice!

Magliabechi. After due examination.

Middleton. There indeed lies the difference. I should have more confidence in God's chosen thief.

Magliabechi. You would rather trust a robber than bend before the image of a saint?

Middleton. At least I know that the one was accepted; I am ignorant that the other was.

Magliabechi. This indeed is even worse than what you most abominate, idolatry.

Middleton. I am not one of those who consider idolatry as the most heinous of sins. In the commission of idolatry for a lifetime there is less wickedness than in one malignant action, or one injurious or blighting word.

Magliabechi. O Mr Middleton! Idolatry is denounced for God's especial vengeance; yet in the blindness of your hearts you Protestants accuse us of this tremendous sin. A thousand times have you been told that we do not venerate what represents, but what is represented.

Middleton. You tell us that you do not worship images, but that you worship in them what they express; be it so: the Pagans did the same, neither better nor worse. What will you answer to the accusation of worshipping a living man? Adoration is offered undisguisedly and openly to priests and monks however profligate and infamous their lives may have been and be. Every Pope is adored by the Holy College on his elevation.*

Magliabechi. We suppose him to be the representative of Jesus Christ.

Middleton. His legate is also his representative, and a *valet de chambre* the legate's. We may obey one man in place of another, but not adore him. The representative system is good only on this side of adoration.

Magliabechi. Prayer, at all times serviceable, may apparently on some occasions be misapplied. Father Onesimo Sozzifaete, on his return from England, presented to me a singular illustration

* The Emperor of Austria had a difference with the Holy Ghost on the Election of Cardinal Della Somagalia to the Popedom. The Holy Ghost had inspired the Holy College to prefer him: the Emperor of Austria disapproved of this inspiration, and set it aside by his *veto*. He knew that there was enough virtue in Italy already, and declared that he wanted no more learning. In proof of the adoration of his present Holiness, the left hand elect of the Holy Ghost, I shall transcribe the very words of the official gazette:—

"Si recò alla Basilica Vaticana per ricevere colà dall' altare della Tribuna l'*adorazione* ed ubbedienza del Sacro Collegio coi solenni riti completi."

of my remark. He had resided some years in London, as chaplain to the Sardinian envoy; in the first floor of his lodging-house dwelt Mr Harbottle, a young clergyman, learned, of elegant manners, yet fond of fox-hunting. Inconsistencies like these are found nowhere but in your country: in others, those who have enough for one side of the character have not enough for the opposite; you in general are sufficiently well-stored to squander much of your intellectual property, to neglect much, and to retain much.

Mutual civilities had passed between the two ecclesiastics, and Father Onesimo had received from Mr Harbottle many invitations to dinner. After the first, he had declined them, deeming the songs and disputations in a slight degree indecorous. The party at this was clerical; and although he represented it as more turbulent in its conclusion than ours are, and although there were many warm disputants, chiefly on jockies or leaders in Parliament, he assured me he was much edified and pleased, when, at the removal of the dishes, each drank devoutly to his old friend. "I thought of you," said he, "my dear Magliabechi, for everyone had then before his eyes the complacent guide of his youth. Mine shed a few tears, at which my friends glanced one upon another and smiled; for from an Englishman not even the crucifix can extort a tear."

Onesimo was at breakfast with Mr Harbottle, when an Italian ran breathless into the room, kissed the father's hand, and begged him to come instantly and attend a dying man. "We will go together," said Mr Harbottle. Following their informant, they passed through several lanes and alleys, and at last mounted the stairs of a garret, in which was lying a youth stabbed the night before by a Livornese, about one of those women who excite the most quarrels and deserve the fewest. "Leave me for a moment," said Father Sozzifante, "I must hear his confession."

Hardly had he spoken, when out came all whom kindness or piety or curiosity had collected, and "He is in paradise!" was the exclamation. Mr Harbottle then entered, and was surprised to hear the worthy confessor ask of the dead man whether he forgave his enemy, and answer in another tone, "Yes, father, from my heart I pardon him."

On returning, he remarked that it appeared strange to him.

"Sir," answered Onesimo, "the Catholic Church enjoins forgiveness of injuries." "All churches enjoin the same," replied Mr Harbottle. "He was unable to speak for himself," said the father, "and therefore I answered for him like a Christian."

Mr Harbottle, as became him, was silent. On their return homeward they passed by a place, which, if I remember, is called Newgate; a gate above which, it appears, criminals are hanged. At that very hour, the cord was round the neck of a wretch who was repeating the Lord's prayer: the first words they heard were, "Give us this day our daily bread." The father looked at his companion with awe, spreading his fingers on his sleeve, and pressing it until he turned his face toward him. They both pushed on; but, such was the crowd, they could not pass the suppliant before he had uttered, "And lead us not into temptation." The good father stepped before Mr Harbottle, and, lifting his hands above his ears, would have said something; but his companion cried smartly, "I have seals to my watch, Signor Sozzifante, and there is never a fellow hanged but he makes twenty fit for it: pray walk on."

Fairly out of the crowd, "Poor sinful soul!" said the father, "ere this time thou art in purgatory! Thy daily bread! alas, thou hast eaten the last mouthful! Thy temptation! thou wilt find but few temptations there, I warrant thee, my son! Even these divine words, Mr Harbottle, may come a little out of season, you perceive."

Mr Harbottle went home dissatisfied. In about an hour, a friend of his from Oxford called on him. As the weather was warm, the door standing ajar, Sozzifante heard him repeat the history of their adventure, and add. "I will be damned if in my firm persuasion the fellow is not a Jesuit. I never should have thought it. He humbugged me about the dead man, and perhaps got another hanged to quiz me. Would you believe it? he has been three good years in getting up this farce,—the first I have ever caught him, and the last he shall ever catch me, at."

Father Onesimo related to me these occurrences, without a word of reproach or an accent of ill-humor. "The English is a strong language," said he, placidly; "and the people, the least deceivers in the world, are naturally the most indignant at a

suspicion of deceit. Mr Harbottle, who, I dare to say, is ripened ere this time into an exemplary and holy man, was then rather fitter for society than for the Church. Do you know," said he in my ear, although we were alone, "I have seen him pay his laundress (and there was nothing between them) five shillings for one week only!—a sum that serves any cardinal the whole winter-quarter: in April and May indeed, from one thing or other, linen wants washing oftener."

Mr Middleton, I have proved my candor, I trust, and my freedom from superstition: but he who seeks will find; and perhaps he who in obstinacy closeth his eyes long together will open them just at the moment when he shall meet what he avoided. I will inform you of some facts I know, proving the efficacy of prayer to saints.

Giacomo Pastrani, of Genoa, a citizen not abundant in the gifts of fortune, had, however, in his possession, two most valuable and extremely rare things,—a virtuous wife, and a picture of his patron Saint Giacomo, by Leonardo. The wife had long been ill; her malady was expensive; their substance was diminishing: still no offers had tempted him, although many had been made, to sell the picture. At last, he refused to alienate it otherwise than in favor of a worthy priest, and only as the price of supplications to the Virgin. "Who knows how many it may require?" said the holy man; "and it is difficult to make a prayer which the Virgin has not heard before: perhaps fifty will hardly do. Now fifty crowns would be little for such protection." The invalid, who heard the conversation, wept aloud. "Take it, take it," said the husband, and wept too, lifting it from the nail, and kissing for the last time the glass that covered it. The priest made a genuflexion, and did the same. His supplications prevailed; the wife recovered. The priest, hearing that the picture was very valuable, although the master was yet uncertain, and that in Genoa there was no artist who could clean it, waited for that operation until he went to Milan. Here it was ascertained to be the work of Leonardo, and a dealer gave him four thousand crowns for it. He returned in high glee at what had happened, and communicated it to all his acquaintance. The recovered woman, on hearing it, fell sick again immediately and died. Wishing to forget the sacrifice of her picture, she had prayed no more to Saint Giacomo? and the

Virgin, we may presume, on that powerful saint's intercession, had abandoned her.

Awful fact! Mr Middleton. Now mark another, perhaps more so. I[8] could overwhelm you with a crowd of witnesses.

Middleton. My dear sir, I do perceive you could.

Magliabechi. The saints in general are more vindictive than our Lady, of whose forbearance, not unaccompanied at last by chastisement, I will relate to you a memorable example. I have indeed no positive proof that he of whom I am about to speak had neglected his prayers to the Virgin; but, from what he certainly did, it is by no means uncharitable to suppose it. He, moreover, by this action, as you will remark, was the cause why others were constrained to omit the salutary act of supplication as they went along.

Middleton. I am in suspense.

Magliabechi. Contiguous to my own villa there is one belonging to Signor Anco-Marzio Natale del Poggio. At the corner of the road, was inserted in the garden-wall an image of the blessed Virgin, with the *bambino* in her arms. Anco-Marzio had been heard to call it, somewhat hastily, an ugly one, and to declare that he would take it down. The threat, however, for several years, was not carried into execution: at last it was accomplished. Behold the consequence! Robbers climbed over the wall (would you believe it?) in the very place whence the effigy had been removed, and upon the very night, too, of its removal: and Anco-Marzio lost not only the whole crop of his lemons, none of which had ever been stolen in former years, but also a pair of knee-buckles, which his maid-servant had taken that occasion of polishing with quicklime, and of which he deeply lamented the loss; not because a crown could scarcely have replaced them, but because they were his father's, and he had bequeathed them by his last will and testament to a very dear old friend.

No reply, no reasoning, can affect this. I know the fact: I visited the spot the next morning; I saw the broken wall; I saw the leaves of the lemon-trees under the vases, without a lemon the size of a filbert on the plants. Who delayed the mad project so long? Who permitted it at last? Who punished it; and for what end? Never afterward did Anco-Marzio pass an effigy of

[8 From "I" to "afterwards" (119 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

the blessed Virgin, but he kissed it again and again with due reverence, although it were wet with whitewash or paint. Every day did he renew the flowers before the one whose tabernacle he had violated, placing them where he could bend his head over them in humble adoration as he returned at night from his business in the city. It has indeed been suspected that he once omitted this duty; certain it is that he once was negligent in it. He acknowledged to me that, coming home later than usual, and desirous of turning the corner and reaching the villa as soon as might be, it being dusk, he was inclined to execute his duty too perfunctoriously, and encountered, instead of the flowers, a bunch of butchers-broom. None grows thereabout. I do not insist on this: but the lemons, Mr Middleton! the thieves, Mr Middleton! the breach in the garden wall, made for an irreligious purpose, and serving to punish irreligion! Well may you ponder. These things cannot occur among you Englishmen.

Middleton. Excuse me, I pray you, my dear sir! Knowing the people of this country, my wonder was (for indeed I did wonder) that the lemons had never been stolen until that year.

Magliabechi. They never were, I do assure you from my own knowledge, for the last thirty.

Middleton. The greater of the two miracles lies here.

Magliabechi. Of the two miracles? Astonishment and sudden terror make us oftentimes see things doubly: for my part, I declare upon my conscience I can see but one.

Middleton. Nor I either, to speak ingenuously.

Magliabechi. Ha, ha! I comprehend you, and perhaps have to blame my deficiency of judgment in going a single step aside from the main subject of prayer. Now then for it: arm yourself with infidelity; chew the base metal, as boys do when they are whipped lest they cry out.

Middleton. I am confident, from your present good-humor, that the castigation you meditate to inflict on me will be lenient. He is not commended who casts new opinions for men, but he who chimes in with old.

Magliabechi. The wisest of us, Mr Middleton, cannot separate the true from the untrue in every thing.

Middleton. It required the hand of God himself, as we are informed, to divide the light from the darkness: we cannot do it,

but we can profit by it. What is light we may call so; and why not what is dark?

Magliabechi. Would it fail to excite a discontent in England, if your Parliament should order Christmas to be celebrated in April? Yet Joseph Scaliger, the most learned man that ever existed, and among the least likely to be led astray by theory, has proved, to the satisfaction of many not unlearned, that the nativity of our Lord happened in that month.

Middleton. As the matter is indifferent both in fact and consequences, I would let it stand. No direct or indirect gain, no unworthy end of any kind, can be obtained by its continuance: it renders men neither the more immoral nor the more dastardly; it keeps them neither the more ignorant of their duties nor the more subservient to any kind of usurpation.

Magliabechi. There may be inconveniences in an opposite direction. Pride and arrogance are not the more amiable for the coarseness of their garb. It is better to wrap up religion in a wafer, and swallow it quietly and contentedly, than to extract from it all its bitterness, make wry faces over it, and quarrel with those who decline the delicacy and doubt the utility of the preparation. Our religion, like the vast edifices in which we celebrate it, seems dark when first entered from without. The vision accommodates itself gradually to the place; and we are soon persuaded that we see just as much as we should see.

Middleton. Be it so; but why admit things for which we have no authority, and which we cannot prove? I have left unsaid a great deal of what I might have said. Not being addicted to ridicule, nor capable of sustaining a comic part, I never have spoken a word about *the bread of the angels*.

Magliabechi. God forbid you should!

Middleton. Even your own church, I imagine, will hardly insist that the bread taken by Christians here on earth, in the sacrament of the eucharist, is the ordinary or extraordinary sustenance of angels. For whatever *our* faith may be, whatever supports it may require, *theirs* is perfect and has received its fruit.

Magliabechi. This is specious; so are many of your thoughts: but as I cannot prove the fact, neither can you prove the contrary; and we both perhaps shall act wisely in considering it as a phrase of devotion.

Middleton. I should think so, if the latitude of such phrases had not offered too many fields of battle. But let me hear the miracle with which you threaten me.

Magliabechi. My dear friend, I am now about to lay before you a fact universally known in our city, and which evinces at once the efficacy of prayer, even where it was irrational, and the consequence of neglecting it afterward.

Angiolina Cecci on the day before her nuptials took the sacrament most devoutly, and implored of our Florentine saint, Maria Bagnesi, to whose family she was related, her intervention for three blessings: that she might have one child only; that the *cavaliere serviente*, agreed on equally by her father and her husband, might be faithful to her; and, lastly, that having beautiful hair, it never might turn gray. Now mark me! Assured of success to her suit by a smile on the countenance of the saint, she neglected her prayers and diminished her alms thenceforward. The money-box, which is shaken during the celebration of mass to recompense the priest for the performance of that holy ceremony, was shaken aloud before her day after day, and never drew a *crazia* from her pocket. She turned away her face from it, even when the collection was made to defray the arrears for the beatification of Bagnesi. Nine months after her marriage, she was delivered of a female infant. I am afraid she expressed some discontent at the dispensations of Providence; for within an hour afterward she brought forth another of the same sex. She became furious, intractable, desperate; sent the babes, without seeing them, into the country, as indeed our ladies usually do; and spake slightingly and maliciously of Saint Maria Bagnesi. The consequence was a puerperal fever which continued several weeks, and was removed at great expense to her family, in masses, wax-candles, and processions. Pictures of the Virgin, wherever they were found by experience to be of more peculiar and more speedy efficacy, were hired at heavy charges from the convents; the cordeliers, to punish her pride and obstinacy, would not carry theirs to the house for less than forty *scudi*.

She recovered, admitted her friends to converse with her, raised herself upon her pillow, and accepted some consolation. At last it was agreed by her physicians that she might dress herself and eat brains and liver. Probably she was ungrateful for a

benefit so signal and unexpected; since no sooner did her *cameriera* comb her hair, than off it came by the handful. She then perceived her error; but, instead of repairing it, abandoned herself to anguish and lamentation. Her *cavaliere serviente*, finding her bald, meagre, and eyesore, renewed his addresses to the mother. The husband, with two daughters to provide for,—the only two ever reared out of the many entrusted to the same peasants,—counted over again and again the dowry, shook his head, sighed piteously, and, hanging on the image of Maria Bagnesi a silver heart of five ounces, which, knowing it to have been stolen, he bought at a cheap rate of a Jew on Ponte Vecchio, calculated that the least of impending evils was to purchase an additional bed just large enough for one.

You ponder, Mr Middleton; you appear astonished at these visitations; you know my sincerity; you fully credit me; I cannot doubt a moment of your conviction: I perceive it marked strongly on your countenance.

Middleton. Indeed, M. Magliabechi, I now discover the validity of prayer to saints, and the danger of neglecting them: recommend me in yours to Saint Maria Bagnesi.*

* Saints in general make a great quantity of oil disappear; but Saint Maria Bagnesi, on the contrary, made a good deal of it come suddenly out of nothing; as will be evident to whoever reads *Breve Ragguaglio della produzione d'oglio seguita o scoperta il di* 30 *Maggio* 1806, *nel venerabile monastero degli Angele a S. Maria-Maddalena de' Pazzi, ad intercessione della B. M. Bartolommea Bagnesi, Virg. Fior. del Terz. Ordine di S. Domenico. Verificata autenticamente per sentenza della Curia Arcivescovite Fiorentina del di* 10 *Decembre* 1806. The quantity was not stinted to a flask or two; but filled up to the brim an earthen vessel containing six or seven barrels, which, by order of the Queen of Etruria, sister of Ferdinand VII. of Spain, was granted in small quantities to the faithful. The minutest portion of it rubbed on the body, as the book attests, with the simple invocation of Saint Maria Bagnesi, produced its own miracle. The courtiers were deeply impressed with this awful verity; so were some in the religious orders; to others it only gave (as oil of old) a cheerful countenance; for Saint Maria Bagnesi did not belong to them.

VI. MILTON AND ANDREW MARVEL.*

Milton. Friend Andrew, I am glad to hear that you amuse yourself in these bad times by the composition of a comedy, and that you have several plans in readiness for others. Now let me advise you to copy the better part of what the Greeks and Romans called the *old*, and to introduce songs and music, which, suitable as they are to tragedy, are more so to the sister Muse. Furthermore, I could desire to see a piece modelled in every part on the Athenian scheme, with the names and characters and manners of times past. For surely you would not add to the immorality of the age, by representing any thing of the present mode upon the theatre. Although we are more abundant in follies, which rather than vices are the ground-work of comedy, we experience less disgust in touching those of other times than of our own; and in a drama the most ancient would have the most novelty. I know that all the periods and all the nations of the world united, have less variety of character than we find in this one city; yet, as you write to amuse yourself and a few learned friends, I am persuaded you would gladly walk out of it for once, and sit down to delineate a Momus or a Satyr, with at least as much complacency as a vulgar fopling or a party-colored buffoon.

O Andrew! albeit our learning raiseth up against us many enemies among the low, and more among the powerful, yet doth it invest us with grand and glorious privileges, and confer on us a largeness of beatitude. We enter our studies, and enjoy a society which we alone can bring together; we raise no jealousy by conversing with one in preference to another: we give no offence to the most illustrious by questioning him as long as we will, and leaving him as abruptly. Diversity of opinion raises no tumult in our presence: each interlocutor stands before us, speaks or is silent, and we adjourn or decide the business at our leisure. Nothing is past which we desire to be present; and we enjoy by anticipation,

* Milton had given his opinion in full on government and religion, and on many kinds of poetry; what he may be supposed to have thought on comedy was wanting.[1]

[1 Vol. ii., 1824. Vol. ii., 1826. Works, i., 1846. Works, iv., 1876.]

somewhat like the power which I imagine we shall possess hereafter of sailing on a wish from world to world. Surely you would turn away as far as possible from the degraded state of our country, you would select any vices and follies for description, rather than those that jostle us in our country-walks, return with us to our house-doors, and smirk on us in silks and satins at our churches.

Come, my old friend, take down your *hortus siccus*. The live plants you would gather do both stink and sting: prythee leave them to wither or to rot, or to be plucked and collated by more rustic hands.

Marvel. I entertain an utter contempt for the populace, whether in robes or tatters; whether the face be bedaubed with cinnabar or with dirt from the alleys and shops. It appears to me, however, that there is as much difference between tragedy and comedy as between the heavens and the clouds; and that comedy draws its life from its mobility. We must take manners as we find them, and copy from the individual, not the species; into which fault Menander fell and seduced his followers. The characters whereon he raised his glory are trivial and contemptible.

> Dum fallax servus, durus pater, improba lena
> Vivent, dum meretrix blanda, Menander erit.

His wisdom towered high above them, and he clothed with smiles what Euripides charged with spleen. The beauty of his moral sentences was hurtful to the spirit of comedy; and I am convinced, that, if we could recover his works, we should find them both less facetious and less dramatic than those of Plautus. Once, by way of experiment, I attempted to imitate his manner, as far as I could judge of it from the fragments we possess. I will give you a specimen: it is the best I have:—

> "Friendship, in each successive stage of life,
> As we approach him, varies to the view:
> In youth he wears the face of Love himself,
> Of Love without his arrows and his wings;
> Soon afterward with Bacchus and with Pan
> Thou findest him, or hearest him resign
> To some dog-pastor by the quiet fire
> (With much good-will and jocular adieu)
> His age-worn mule or broken-hearted steed.
> Fly not, as thou wert wont, to his embrace,

Lest, after one long yawning gaze, he swear
Thou art the best good-fellow in the world,
But he had quite forgotten thee, by Jove!
Or laughter wag his newly bearded chin
At recollection of his childish hours.
But wouldst thou see, young man, his latest form,
When e'en this laughter, e'en this memory fails?
Look at yon fig-tree statue, golden once,
As all would deem it; rottenness falls out
At every little chink the worms have made,
And, if thou triest to lift it up again,
It breaks upon thee. Leave it, touch it not;
Its very lightness would encumber thee:
Come, thou hast seen it; 'tis enough; away!"

Milton. This indeed is in the manner I would propose.

Marvel. Yet if it were spoken on our stage, I should be condemned as a man ignorant of the art; and justly too: for it accords not with its complexion. Inevitable events and natural reflections, but reflections not exhibited before and events not expected, please me better than the most demonstrable facts, the most sober truths, the most clever improbabilities, and the most acute repartees. In comedy, we should oftener raise reflections than present them.

Now for plot.

Intricacy was always held necessary on the modern stage, and the more so when delicacy was the least. It was, however, so difficult to make the audience keep watch and ward for it, and to command an uninterrupted attention for five whole acts, that many of the best writers, from Terence to the present age, have combined two plots; hoping that what is twisted together will untwist together, and leaving a great deal to the goodness of Providence, and to the faith and charity of their fellow-creatures.

Milton. True enough. Your plotters bring many great changes into many whole families, and sometimes into several and distant countries, within the day; and what is more difficult and incredible, send off all parties well satisfied, excepting one scape-goat. For my own share, I am content with seeing a fault wittily rebuked and checked effectually; and think *that* surprising enough, considering the time employed in doing it, without the formation of attachments, the begetting or finding of children, bickerings, buffetings, deaths, marriages, distresses, wealth again,

love again, whims and suspicions, shaking heads, and shaking hands. These things are natural, I confess it; but one would rather breathe between them, and perhaps one would think it no bad husbandry to put some of them off until another season. The combination of them, marvellous as it appears, is less difficult to contrive than to credit.

Marvel. I have always been an idle man, and have read or attended the greater part of the plays that are extant; and will venture to affirm, that, exclusive of Shakspeare's and some Spanish pieces never represented nor translated, there are barely half-a-dozen plots among them, comic and tragic: so that it is evidently a much easier matter to run over the usual variations, than to keep entirely in another tune, and to raise up no recollections. Both in tragedies and comedies the changes are pretty similar, and nearly in the same places. You perceive the turns and windings of the road a mile before you, and you know exactly the precipice down which the hero or heroine must fall. You can discover with your naked eye who does the mischief, and who affords the help; where the assassin bursts forth with the dagger, and where the old gentleman shakes the crabstick over the shoulder of his dissolute nephew.

Milton. I do not wish direction-posts to perplexities and intrigues: I oppose this agrarian law, this general inclosure act. I would not attempt to square the circle of poetry; and am avowedly a non-juror to the doctrine of grace and predestination in the drama.

Marvel. In my project, one action leads to and brings about another, naturally, but not necessarily. The event is the confusion of the evil-doer, whose machinations are the sole means of accomplishing what their motion seemed calculated to thwart and overthrow. No character is introduced that doth not tend toward the development of the plot; no one is merely prompter to a witticism, or master of the ceremonies to a repartee.

Characters in general are made subservient to the plot: here the plot is made subservient to the characters. All are real. I have only invited them to meet, and bestowed on them those abilities for conversation without which a comedy might be very natural, but would not possess the nature of a comedy. I expose only what arises from the headiness of unruly passions, or is preci-

pitated by the folly that verges upon vice. This exposure is in the corner of a room, not in the stocks nor in the market-place. Comedy with me sits in an easy chair, as Menander is represented by the statuary; for it is as possible to be too busy on the scenic theatre as it is on the theatre of life. To those who admire the double plot and the machinery of the rope walk, I only say, "Go to my betters, whom you have so long neglected; carry off from them as much as you can bear: you are then welcome to rip up my sheet, and to sew a scene in wherever the needle will go through. In this manner, the good may be made acceptable by the new, and the new can be no loser by the good."

Milton. You say nothing about the chorus. I have introduced it, you know, in my *Samson Agonistes*, and intend to bring it forward in my *Macbeth*.

Marvel. Dear John! thou art lucky in having escaped two Stuarts; and luckier wilt thou be if thou escapest one Macbeth. Contend with Homer, but let Shakspeare rest. Drop that work; prythee drop it for ever: thou mayest appear as high as he is (for who can measure either of you?) if thou wilt only stand some way off.

In tragedy, the choruses were grave people, called upon, or ready without it, to give advice and consolation in cases of need. To set them singing and moralizing amid the dolefullest emergencies, when the poet should be *reporting progress*, is like sticking a ballad upon a turnstile to hasten folks on. The comic poet called out his regular chorus, in imitation of the tragic, till the genius of Menander took a middle flight between Aristophanes and Euripides. Comedy had among the ancients her ovations, but not her triumphs.

Milton. Menander's form, which the Romans and French have imitated, pleases me less than the older. He introduced better manners; but, employing no variety of verse, and indulging in few sallies of merriment, I incline to believe that he more frequently instructed than entertained. In the joyous glades of Aristophanes, the satyrs did not dance without the nymphs, and in the rich variety of the festival the purest and most refreshing water was mixed with the most sparkling wine. If it were not tedious to continue or take up again a metaphor, I should say that all the fruit of Jonson, and those like him, is mashed and mealy;

and, where there is any flavor at all, it is the strong flavor of fermentation or of mustiness.

The verse itself of Aristophanes is a dance of Bacchanals: one cannot read it with composure. He had, however, but little true wit, whatever may be asserted to the contrary. There is abundance of ribaldry, and of that persecution by petulance which the commonalty call banter.

Marvel. He takes delight in mocking and ridiculing the manner of Euripides. In my opinion, if a modern may form one upon the subject, he might with his ingenuity have seized more points to let his satire lighten on, and have bent them to his purpose with more dexterity and address.

Milton. His ridicule on the poetry is misplaced, on the manners is inelegant. Euripides was not less wise than Socrates, nor less tender than Sappho. There is a tenderness which elevates the genius: there is also a tenderness which corrupts the heart. The latter, like every impurity, is easy to communicate; the former is difficult to conceive. Strong minds alone possess it; virtuous minds alone value it. I hold it abominable to turn into derision what is excellent. To render undesirable what ought to be desired is the most mischievous and diabolical of malice. To exhibit him as contemptible, who ought according to the conscience of the exhibiter to be respected and revered, is a crime the more odious, as it can be committed only by violence to his feelings, against the reclamations of Justice, and among the struggles of Virtue. And what is the tendency of this brave exploit? To cancel the richest legacy that ever was bequeathed to him, and to prove his own bastardy in relation to the most illustrious of his species. If it is disgraceful to demolish or obliterate a tombstone over the body of the most obscure among the dead, if it is an action for which a boy would be whipped as guilty of the worst idleness and mischief, what is it to overturn the monument that Gratitude has erected to Genius, and to break the lamp that is lighted by Devotion over against the image of Love? The writings of the wise are the only riches our posterity cannot squander: why depreciate them? To Antiquity again; but afar from Aristophanes.

Marvel. Our admiration of Antiquity is in part extraneous from her merits; yet even this part, strange as the assertion may

appear, is well founded. We learn many things from the ancients which it cost them no trouble to teach, and upon which they employed no imagination, no learning, no time. Those among us who have copied them have not succeeded. To produce any effect on morals or on manners, or indeed to attract any attention, —which, whatever be the pretext, is the principal if not the only aim of most writers, and certainly of all the comic,—we must employ the language and consult the habits of our age. We may introduce a song without retrospect to the old comedy; a moral sentence, without authority from the new. The characters, even on their improved and purified stage, were, we know, of so vulgar and uncleanly a cast, that, with all their fine reflections, there was something like the shirt of Lazarus patched with the purple of Dives. Do not imagine I am a detractor from the glory of our teachers, from their grace, their elegance, and their careful weeding away of tiny starveling thoughts, that higher and more succulent may have room.

Milton. No, Marvel, no. Between their poetry and ours you perceive as great a difference as between a rose and a dandelion. There is, if I may express myself so, without pursuing a metaphor till it falls exhausted at my feet, a sort of refreshing odor flying off it perpetually; not enough to oppress or to satiate; nothing is beaten or bruised; nothing smells of the stalk; the flower itself is half concealed by the Genius of it hovering round. Write on the same principles as guided them.

Marvel. Yes; but I would not imitate them further. I will not be pegged down to any plot, nor follow any walk, however well-rolled, where the persons of the drama cannot consistently lead the way.

Milton. Reasonable enough; but why should not both comedy and tragedy be sometimes so disciplined as may better fit them for our closets? I allow that their general intention is for action: it is also the nature of odes to be accompanied by voices and instruments. I only would suggest to you that a man of learning, with a genius suited to comedy, may as easily found it upon antiquity as the tragedian of equal abilities his tragedy; and that the one might be made as acceptable to the study as the other to the stage. I would not hamper you with rules and precedents. Comply with no other laws or limits than such as are necessary to the action.

There may be occasion for songs, and there may not; beside, a poet may be capable of producing a good comedy who is incapable of composing a tolerable stanza: and, on the other hand, Pindar himself might have been lost in a single scene.

Marvel. True: but tell me, friend John, are you really serious in your proposal of interspersing a few antiquated words, that my comedy may be acceptable to the readers of Plautus and Terence? This I hear.

Milton. I have, on several occasions, been a sufferer by the delivery of my sentiments to a friend. Antiquated words, used sparingly and characteristically, give often a force and always a gravity, to composition. It is not every composition that admits them: a comedy *may* in one character, but charily and choicely.

There is in Plautus a great fund of language and of wit: he is far removed from our Shakspeare, but resembles him more than any other of the ancients. In reading him and Terence, my delight arises not so materially from the aptitude of character and expression, as from a clear and unobstructed insight into the feelings and manners of those ancient times, and an admission into the conversations to which Scipio and Lælius attended.

You[2] will carefully observe the proper and requisite unities, not according to the wry rigor of our neighbors, who never take up an old idea without some extravagance in its application. We would not draw out a conspiracy in the presence of those who are conspired against; nor hold it needful to call a council of postilions, before we decide on the distance we may allow to our heroes between the acts. Let others treat them as monkeys and parrots, loving to hear them chatter, tied by the leg. The music renders a removal of twenty or thirty miles, during the action, probable enough, unless you take out your watch and look upon it while you are listening. In that case, although you oblige the poet to prove the pedigree of the horses, and to bring witnesses that such horses might go thus far without drawing bit, your reasons are insufficient by fifty minutes or an hour.

The historical dramas of Shakspeare should be designated by that name only, and not be called tragedies, lest persons who reflect little (and how few reflect much!) should try them by the rules of Aristoteles; which would be as absurd as to try a gem upon

[2 From "You" to "partaken" (33 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

a touch-stone. Shakspeare, in these particularly, but also in the rest, can only be relished by a people which retains its feelings and character in perfection. The French, more than any other, are transmuted by the stream that runs over them, like the baser metals. Beautiful poems, in dialogue too, may be composed on the greater part of a life, if that life be eventful, and if there be a proper choice of topics. *Votivâ veluti depicta tabellâ.*

No other than Shakspeare hath ever yet been able to give unceasing interest to similar pieces; but he has given it amply to such as understand him. Sometimes his levity (we hear) is misplaced. Human life is exhibited not only in its calamities and its cares, but in the gay unguarded hours of ebullient and confident prosperity; and we are the more deeply interested in the reverses of those whose familiarity we have long enjoyed, and whose festivity we have recently partaken.

Marvel. Now, what think you about the number of acts?

Milton. There is no reason, in nature or in art, why a drama should occupy five. Be assured, my friend Andrew, the fifth-act men will hereafter be thought as absurd as the fifth-monarchy men. The number of acts should be optional, like the number of scenes, and the division of them should equally be subordinate to the convenience of the poet in the procession of his events. In respect to duration, nothing is requisite or reasonable but that it should not loiter nor digress, and that it should not exhaust the patience nor disappoint the expectation of the audience. Dramatists have gone to work in this business with so much less of wisdom than of system, that I question, when they say a comedy or tragedy in *five acts*, whether they should not rather say in *five scenes;* whether in fact, the scenes should not designate the divisions, and the acts the subdivisions; for the *scene* usually changes to constitute a new *act*, and when a fresh *actor* enters we usually call it a new *scene*. I do not speculate on any one carrying the identity of place strictly throughout a whole performance, least of all a tragedy, unless for the purpose of ridiculing some late French critics. As a tragedy must consist of opposite counsels and unforeseen events, if the author should exhibit his whole action in one hall or chamber, he would be laughed to scorn. Comedy is not formed to astonish: she neither expects nor wishes great changes. Let her argue rarely: let her remark lightly: if she reasons too

well, her audience will leave her, and reflect upon it. Those generally are the most temperate who have large and well-stored cellars. You have every thing at home, Andrew, and need not step out of your way. Those show that they possess much who hold much back.

Marvel. Be not afraid of me: I will not push my characters forward, and make them stare most one upon another when they are best acquainted. The union of wisdom with humor is unexpected enough for me. I would rather see it than the finest piece of arras slit asunder, or the richest screen in Christendom overturned; than the cleverest trick that was ever played among the scenes, or than a marriage that should surprise me like an Abyssinian's with a Laplander.

VII. LORD BACON AND RICHARD HOOKER.[1]

Bacon. Hearing much of your worthiness and wisdom, Master Richard Hooker, I have besought your comfort and consolation in this my too heavy affliction: for we often do stand in need of hearing what we know full well, and our own balsams must be poured into our breasts by another's hand. As[2] the air at our doors is sometimes more expeditious in removing pain and heaviness from the body than the most far-fetched remedies would be, so the voice alone of a neighborly and friendly visitant may be more effectual in assuaging our sorrows than whatever is most forcible in rhetoric and most recondite in wisdom. On these occasions we cannot put ourselves in a posture to receive the latter, and still less are we at leisure to look into the corners of our storeroom, and to uncurl the leaves of our references. As for Memory, who, you may tell me, would save us the trouble, she is footsore

[1 Richard Hooker died in 1600, whereas Bacon's fall did not take place till 1621, so that this Conversation is as imaginary in every respect as the two preceding ones. As Landor keeps Hooker alive 21 years longer than Nature did, he might perhaps have also made him aware of Bacon's more correct title of Viscount St. Albans. Vol. ii., 1824. Vol. ii., 1826. Works, i., 1846. Works, iv., 1876.]

[2 From "As" to "back" (11 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

enough in all conscience with me, without going further back. Withdrawn as you live from court and courtly men, and having ears occupied by better reports than such as are flying about me, yet haply so hard a case as mine, befalling a man heretofore not averse from the studies in which you take delight, may have touched you with some concern.

Hooker. I do think, my Lord of Verulam, that, unhappy as you appear, God in sooth has foregone to chasten you, and that the day which in his wisdom he appointed for your trial, was the very day on which the King's Majesty gave unto your ward and custody the great seal of his English realm. And yet perhaps it may be—let me utter it without offence—that your features and stature were from that day forward no longer what they were before. Such an effect do power and rank and office produce even on prudent and religious men.

A hound's whelp howleth, if you pluck him up above where he stood: man, in much greater peril from falling, doth rejoice. You, my Lord, as befitted you, are smitten and contrite, and do appear in deep wretchedness and tribulation to your servants and those about you; but I know that there is always a balm which lies uppermost in these afflictions, and that no heart rightly softened can be very sore.

Bacon. And yet, Master Richard, it is surely no small matter to lose the respect of those who looked up to us for countenance; and the favor of a right learned king; and, O Master Hooker, such a power of money! But money is mere dross. I should always hold it so, if it possessed not two qualities; that of making men treat us reverently, and that of enabling us to help the needy.

Hooker. The respect, I think, of those who respect us for what a fool can give and a rogue can take away, may easily be dispensed with; but it is indeed a high prerogative to help the needy; and when it pleases the Almighty to deprive us of it, let us believe that he foreknoweth our inclination to negligence in the charge entrusted to us, and that in his mercy he hath removed from us a most fearful responsibility.

Bacon. I know a number of poor gentlemen to whom I could have rendered aid.

Hooker. Have you examined and sifted their worthiness?

Bacon. Well and deeply.

Hooker. Then must you have known them long before your adversity, and while the means of succoring them were in your hands.

Bacon. You have circumvented and entrapped me, Master Hooker. Faith! I am mortified: you the schoolman, I the schoolboy.

Hooker. Say not so, my Lord. Your years indeed are fewer than mine, by seven or thereabout; but your knowledge is far higher, your experience richer. Our wits are not always in blossom upon us. When the roses are overcharged and languid, up springs a spike of rue. Mortified on such an occasion? God forefend it! But again to the business.—I should never be over-penitent for my neglect of needy gentlemen who have neglected themselves much worse. They have chosen their profession with its chances and contingencies. If they had protected their country by their courage or adorned it by their studies, they would have merited, and under a king of such learning and such equity, would have received in some sort, their reward. I look upon them as so many old cabinets of ivory and tortoise-shell, scratched, flawed, splintered, rotten, defective both within and without, hard to unlock, insecure to lock up again, unfit to use.

Bacon. Methinks it beginneth to rain, Master Richard. What if we comfort our bodies with a small cup of wine, against the ill-temper of the air. Wherefore, in God's name, are you affrightened?

Hooker. Not so, my Lord; not so.

Bacon. What then affects you?

Hooker. Why, indeed, since your Lordship interrogates me—I looked, idly and imprudently, into that rich buffet; and I saw, unless the haze of the weather has come into the parlor, or my sight is the worse for last night's reading, no fewer than six silver pints. Surely, six tables for company are laid only at coronations.

Bacon. There are many men so squeamish that forsooth they would keep a cup to themselves, and never communicate it to their nearest and best friend; a fashion which seems to me offensive in an honest house, where no disease of ill repute ought to be feared. We have lately, Master Richard, adopted strange fashions; we have run into the wildest luxuries. The Lord Leicester, I heard it from my father—God forefend it should

ever be recorded in our history!—when he entertained Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle, laid before her Majesty a fork of pure silver. I the more easily credit it, as Master Thomas Coriatt doth vouch for having seen the same monstrous sign of voluptuousness at Venice. We are surely the especial favorites of Providence, when such wantonness hath not melted us quite away. After this portent, it would otherwise have appeared incredible that we should have broken the Spanish Armada.

Pledge me: hither comes our wine.

[*To the Servant.*

Dolt! villain! is not this the beverage I reserve for myself? The blockhead must imagine that Malmsey runs in a stream under the ocean, like the Alpheus. Bear with me, good Master Hooker, but verily I have little of this wine, and I keep it as a medicine for my many and growing infirmities. You are healthy at present: God in his infinite mercy long maintain you so! Weaker drink is more wholesome for you. The lighter ones of France are best accommodated by Nature to our constitutions, and therefore she has placed them so within our reach that we have only to stretch out our necks, in a manner, and drink them from the vat. But this Malmsey, this Malmsey, flies from centre to circumference, and makes youthful blood boil.

Hooker. Of a truth, my knowledge in such matters is but spare. My Lord of Canterbury once ordered part of a goblet, containing some strong Spanish wine, to be taken to me from his table when I dined by sufferance with his chaplains, and, although a most discreet prudent man as befitteth his high station, was not so chary of my health as your Lordship. Wine is little to be trifled with, physic less. The Cretans, the brewers of this Malmsey, have many aromatic and powerful herbs among them. On their mountains, and notably on Ida, grows that dittany which works such marvels, and which perhaps may give activity to this hot medicinal drink of theirs. I would not touch it, knowingly: an unregarded leaf, dropped into it above the ordinary, might add such puissance to the concoction as almost to break the buckles in my shoes; since we have good and valid authority that the wounded hart, on eating thereof, casts the arrow out of his haunch or entrails, although it stuck a palm deep.

Bacon. When I read of such things I doubt them. Religion

and politics belong to God, and to God's vicegerent the King; we must not touch upon them unadvisedly: but if I could procure a plant of dittany on easy terms, I would persuade my apothecary and my gamekeeper to make some experiments.

Hooker. I dare not distrust what grave writers have declared, in matters beyond my knowledge.

Bacon. Good Master Hooker, I have read many of your reasonings; and they are admirably well sustained: added to which, your genius has given such a strong current to your language as can come only from a mighty elevation and a most abundant plenteousness. Yet forgive me, in God's name, my worthy Master, if you descried in me some expression of wonder at your simplicity. We are all weak and vulnerable somewhere: common men in the higher parts; heroes, as was feigned of Achilles, in the lower. You would define to a hair's breadth the qualities, states, and dependencies of Principalities, Dominations, and Powers; you would be unerring about the Apostles and the Churches; and 'tis marvellous how you wander about a potherb!

Hooker. I know my poor weak intellects, most noble Lord, and how scantily they have profited by my hard painstaking. Comprehending few things, and those imperfectly, I say only what others have said before, wise men and holy; and if, by passing through my heart into the wide world around me, it pleaseth God that this little treasure shall have lost nothing of its weight and pureness, my exultation is then the exultation of humility. Wisdom consisteth not in knowing many things, nor even in knowing them thoroughly; but in choosing and in following what conduces the most certainly to our lasting happiness and true glory. And this wisdom, my Lord of Verulam, cometh from above.

Bacon. I have observed among the well-informed and the ill-informed nearly the same quantity of infirmities and follies: those who are rather the wiser keep them separate, and those who are wisest of all keep them better out of sight. Now examine the sayings and writings of the prime philosophers: and you will often find them, Master Richard, to be untruths made to resemble truths. The business with them is to approximate as nearly as possible, and not to touch it: the goal of the charioteer is *evitata fervidis rotis*, as some poet saith. But we who care nothing for chants and cadences, and have no time to catch at applauses, push

forward over stones and sands straightway to our object. I have persuaded men, and shall persuade them for ages, that I possess a wide range of thought unexplored by others, and first thrown open by me, with many fair enclosures of choice and abstruse knowledge. I have incited and instructed them to examine all subjects of useful and rational inquiry; few that occurred to me have I myself left untouched or untried: one however hath almost escaped me, and surely one worth the trouble.

Hooker. Pray, my Lord, if I am guilty of no indiscretion, what may it be?

Bacon. Francis Bacon.

Lest it be thought that authority is wanting for the strong expression of Hooker on the effects of dittany, the reader is referred to the curious treatise of Plutarch on the reasoning faculties of animals, in which (near the end) he asks, "Who instructed deer wounded by the Cretan arrow to seek for dittany? on the tasting of which herb the bolts fall immediately from their bodies." [3]

[3 First ed. reads: "bodies. I do not remember to have read in other authors that the effect is quite so instantaneous; and I have not leisure for an index-hunt—a good half-hour's work."]

VIII. SAMUEL JOHNSON AND JOHN* HORNE (TOOKE).[1]

Tooke.[2] Doctor Johnson, I rejoice in the opportunity, late as it presents itself, of congratulating you on the completion of your

* J. Horne assumed the name of Tooke after the supposed date of this Conversation.

[1 The greatest admirer of Landor must approach the two following Conversations with a sigh; "catching at words," if one may quote Borrow, is not and cannot be interesting over ninety pages or more. Catching at letters is even less so. Surely no writer ever presented in so strange a form his views upon etymology and spelling. Of Landor's opinion concerning spelling it is enough to say that he believed that the seat of authority in language and in spelling were the same. To spell as the classic authors spelt was his ideal. But in practice the student who guided himself by that light would find too often that they spelt as the fancy took

[2 First ed. reads: "*Tooke.* Permit me to congratulate you, Dr Johnson, on," etc.]

great undertaking: my bookseller sent me your *Dictionary* the day it came from the press, and it has exercised ever since a good part of my time and attention.

Johnson. Who are you, sir?

Tooke. My name is Horne.

Johnson. What is my *Dictionary*, sir, to you?

Tooke. A treasure.

Johnson. Keep it then at home and to yourself, sir, as you would any other treasure, and talk no more about it than you would about that. You[3] have picked up some knowledge, sir; but out of dirty places. What man in his senses would fix his study on the hustings? When a gentleman takes it into his head to conciliate the rabble, I deny his discretion and I doubt his honesty. Sir, what can you have to say to me?

Tooke. Doctor, my studies have led me some little way into

them. Landor himself was not unaware of this, but nevertheless he still saw in the usage of Ben Jonson or Milton a guide to orthography. For another Conversation on this subject, see that between "Landor and Archdeacon Hare." Tooke's "Diversions of Purley," suggested the introduction of his name; and Dr Johnson was a natural character. One cannot help regretting that instead of the comedy, that might have been, there is only a mass of words and scraps of verse. In life the two men never met. Johnson of course disliked Tooke's opinions, but respected his knowledge. "This year the Reverend Mr Horne published his *Letter to Mr Dunning on the English Particle;* Johnson read it, and though not treated in it with sufficient respect, he had candour enough to say to Mr Steward, "Were I to make a new edition of my *Dictionary*, I would adopt several of Mr Horne's etymologies; I hope they did not put the dog in the pillory for his libel; he has too much literature for that." (Boswell's Johnson, iii., 354. Clarendon Press edition, 1887). In the "Diversions of Purley," Johnson is treated with less respect. On page 119 of that work (ed. 1860), there is a long note of which the first few lines may be quoted here. "Johnson's merit ought not to be denied to him; but his Dictionary is the most imperfect and faulty, and the least valuable of any of his productions; and that share of merit which it possesses makes it by so much the more hurtful. I rejoice, however, that though the least valuable, he found it the most profitable: for I could never read his Preface without shedding a tear. And yet it must be confessed, that his *Grammar* and *History* and Dictionary of what *he calls* the English Language are in all respects (except the bulk of the latter) most truly contemptible performances; and a reproach to the learning and industry of a nation, which could receive them with the slightest approbation." (Imag. Convers., ii. 1824. ii., 1826. Works, i., 1846. Works, iv., 1876.)

[3] From "You" to "me" (5 lines) added in 3rd ed.

etymology, and I am interested in whatever contributes to the right knowledge of our language.

Johnson. Sir, have you read our old authors?

Tooke. Almost all of them that are printed and extant.

Johnson. Prodigious! do you speak truth?

Tooke. To the best of my belief.

Johnson. Sir, how could you, a firebrand tossed about by the populace, find leisure for so much reading?

Tooke. The number of English books printed before the accession of James the First is smaller than you appear to imagine; and the manuscripts, I believe, are not numerous: certainly in the libraries of our Universities they are scanty. I wish you had traced in your preface all the changes made in the orthography these last three centuries, for which about five additional pages would have been sufficient. The[4] first attempt to purify and reform the tongue was made by John Lyly, in a book entitled *Euphues and his England** and a most fantastical piece of fustian it is. This author has often been confounded with William Lily, a better grammarian, and better known. Benjamin Jonson did somewhat, and could have done more. Although our governors have taken no pains either to improve our language or to extend it, none in Europe is spoken habitually by so many. The French boast the universality of theirs; yet the Germans, the Spaniards, and the Italians may contend with them on this ground: for as the Dutch is a dialect of the German, so is the Portuguese of the Spanish, and not varying in more original words than the Milanese and Neapolitan from the Tuscan. The[5] *lingua franca*, which pervades the coasts of the Mediterranean, the Ionian, and the Ægean seas, is essentially Italian. The languages of the two most extensive empires in Europe are confined to the fewest

[[4] From "The" to "known" (6 lines) added in 2nd ed. From "Benjamin" to "more" (2 lines) added in 3rd ed. From "Although" to "Tuscan" (8 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

* Among the works of Charles de St. Pierre is *Projet pour réformer l'Orthographie des Langues de l'Europe*. He must not be confounded with Barnardin de St. Pierre, fanciful as is the treatise.

[[5] From "The" to "Italian" (3 lines) added in 3rd ed. From "The" to "English" (8 lines) "and" to "people" (2 lines) added in 3rd ed. "We" to "seam" (8 lines) added in 2nd ed. "And" to "soreness" added in 3rd ed. "*Johnson*" to "particulars" (3 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

people. There are not thirteen millions who speak Turkish, nor fifteen who speak Russian, though branches of the Sclavonic are scattered far. If any respect had been had to the literary glory of our country, whereon much of its political is and ever will be dependent, many millions more would at this time be speaking in English; and the Irish, the Welsh, and the Canadians, like the Danes and Saxons, would have forgotten they were a conquered people.

We should be anxious both to improve our language and to extend it. England ought to have no colony in which it will not be soon the only one spoken. Nations may be united by identity of speech more easily than by identity of laws; for identity of laws only shows the conquered that they are bound *to* another people, while identity of speech shows them that they are bound *with* it. There is no firm conjunction but this; none that does not retain on it the scar and seam, and often with much soreness.

Johnson. So far, I believe, I may agree with you, and remain a good subject.

Tooke. Let us now descend from generalities to particulars. Our spelling hath undergone as many changes as the French, and worse.

Johnson. And[6] because it hath undergone many, you would make it undergo more! There is a fastidiousness in the use of language that indicates an atrophy of mind. We must take words as the world presents them to us, without looking at the root. If we grubbed under this and laid it bare, we should leave no room for our thoughts to lie evenly, and every expression would be constrained and cramped. We should scarcely find a metaphor in the purest author that is not false or imperfect, nor could we imagine one ourselves that would not be stiff and frigid. Take now, for instance, a phrase in common use. *You are rather late.* Can any thing seem plainer? Yet *rather*, as you know, meant originally *earlier*, being the comparative of *rathe:* the "rathe primrose" of the poet recalls it. We cannot say, *You are sooner late:* but who is so troublesome and silly as to question the propriety of saying, *You are rather late?* We likewise say, *bad*

[6 From "And" to "more" (2 lines) added in 2nd ed. From "There" to "What!" (115 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

orthography, and *false orthography*: how can there be false or bad *right-spelling*?

Tooke. I suspect there are more of these inadvertencies in our language than in any other.

Johnson. Sir, our language is a very good language.

Tooke. Were it not, I should be less solicitous to make it better.

Johnson. *You* make it better, sir!

Tooke. By reverencing the authority of the learned, by exposing the corruptions of the ignorant, and by reclaiming what never ought to have been obsolete.

Johnson. Sir, the task is hopeless: little can be done now.

Tooke. And because little can be done, must we do nothing? Because with all our efforts we are imperfect, may not we try to be virtuous? Many of the anomalies in our language can be avoided or corrected: if many shall yet remain, something at least will have been done for elegance and uniformity.

Johnson. I hate your innovations.

Tooke. I not only hate them, but would resist and reject them, if I could. It is only such writers as you that can influence the public by your authority and example.

Johnson. Sir, if the best writer in England dared to spell three words differently from his contemporaries, and as Milton spelled them, he would look about in vain for a publisher.

Tooke. Yet Milton is most careful and exact in his spelling, and his ear is as correct as his learning. His language would continue to be the language of his country, had it not been for the Restoration.

Johnson. I have patience, sir! I have patience, sir! Pray go on.

Tooke. I will take advantage of so much affability; and I hope that patience, like other virtues, may improve by exercise.

On the return of Charles from the Continent, some of his followers may really have lost their native idiom, or at least may have forgotten the graver and solider parts of it; for many were taken over in their childhood. On their return to England, nothing gave such an air of fashion as imperfection in English: it proved high breeding, it displayed the court and loyalty. Home-bred English ladies soon acquired it from their noble and brave

gallants; and it became the language of the Parliament, of the Church, and of the Stage. Between the last two places was pretty equally distributed all the facetiousness left among us.

Johnson. Keep clear of the Church, sir, and stick to language.

Tooke. Punctually will I obey each of your commands.

Johnson. Did South and Cowley and Waller fall into this slough?

Tooke. They could not keep others from it. I peruse their works with pleasure; but South, the greatest of them, is negligent and courtly in his spelling, and sometimes, although not often, more gravely incorrect.

Johnson. And pray now, what language do you like?

Tooke. The best in all countries is that which is spoken by intelligent women, of too high rank for petty affectation, and of too much request in society for deep study. Cicero praises more than one such among the Romans! the number was greater among the Greeks. We have no writer in our language so pure as Madame de Sévigné. Indeed, we must acknowledge that the French far excel us in purity of style. When have we seen, or when can we expect, such a writer as Le Sage? In our days there is scarcely an instance of a learned or unlearned man who has written gracefully, excepting your friend Goldsmith and (if your modesty will admit my approaches) yourself. In your *Lives of the Poets*, you have laid aside the sceptre of Jupiter for the wand of Mercury, and have really called up with it some miserable ghosts from the dead.

Johnson. Sir, I desire no compliments.

Tooke. Before, I offered not my compliment but my tribute: I dreaded a repulse; but I little expected to see, as I do, the finger of Aurora on your face.

Johnson. If the warmth of the room is enough to kindle your poetry, well may it possess a slight influence on my cheek. The learned men, I presume, are superseded by your public orators.

Tooke. Our parliamentary speakers of most eminence are superficial in scholarship, as we understand the word, and by no means dangerously laden with any species of knowledge. Burke is the most eloquent and philosophical of them; Fox the readiest at reply, the stoutest debater, the acutest disputant.

Johnson. Rebels! but what you say of their knowledge is the truth. I have said it of one party, and I know it of the other, else I would trounce you for your asseveration.

Tooke. You yourself induced me to make the greater part of my remarks; more important, as being on things more important, than transitory men: such is language.

Johnson. How, sir, did I?

Tooke. By having recommended in some few instances a correcter mode of spelling. Bentley and Hall and Dryden, though sound writers, are deficient in authority with men; when, for example, they write *incompatible* for *incompetible:* we want both words, but we must be careful not to confound and misapply them. Dryden and Roscommon formed a design of purifying and fixing the language: neither of them knew its origin or principles, or was intimately or indeed moderately versed in our earlier authors, of whom Chaucer was probably the only one they had perused. It is pretended that they abandoned the design from the unquietness of the times: as if the times disturbed them in their studies, leaving them peace enough for poetry, but not enough for philology!

Johnson. And are you, sir, more acute, more learned, or more profound? What! because at one time our English books were scanty, you would oppose the scanty to the many, with all the rashness and inconsistency of a republican.

Tooke.[7] Bearing all your reproofs and reproaches with equanimity and submission, I converse with you on this subject because you have given up much time to it: with another I should decline the discussion. I am hopeful of gaining some information and of suggesting some subject for inquiry. Illiterate, inconsiderate, irreverent, and overweening men will be always disregarded by me. Like children and clowns, if they see a throne or a judgment-seat, they must forsooth sit down in it. Such people set themselves above me, and enjoy the same feelings as those in the one-shilling gallery who look down on Garrick. He is only on the stage, no higher than the footlights, and plays only for others; whereas they have placed themselves at the summit, and applaud and condemn to please their fancies. It is equitable that coarse impudence should be met with calm contempt, and that wisdom

[7 From "*Tooke*" to "principles" (63 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

should sit down and lower her eyes when impudence trips over the way to discountenance her, or ignorance starts up to teach her.

Johnson. Coxcombs and blockheads always have been, and always will be, innovators; some in dress, some in polity, some in language.

Tooke. I wonder whether they invented the choice appellations you have just repeated.

Johnson. No, sir! Indignant wise men invented them.

Tooke. Long ago then. Indignant wise men lived in the time of the Centaurs: such combinations have never existed since. Your remark, however, on the introducers of new words into our language is, I apprehend, well-founded; but you spoke generally and absolutely, and in this (I think) incorrectly. Julius Cæsar, whom you ought to love and reverence for giving the last blow to a republic, was likewise an innovator in spelling; so was Virgil, and to such a degree that, Aulus Gellius tells us, he spelled the same word differently in different places, to gratify his ear. Milton has done the same.

Johnson. And sometimes injudiciously: for instance, in writing *Hee* emphatically; *He* less so. He also writes *subtile*, as a scholar should do; and *suttle*, as the word is pronounced by the most vulgar.

Tooke. Cicero, not contented with new spellings, created new words. Now the three Romans have immemorially been considered the most elegant and careful writers in their language; and we confer on our countryman but a small portion of the praises due to him, in asserting that both in poetry and prose his mastery is above them all. Milton is no factitious or accrete man; no pleader, no rhetorician. Truth in him is the parent of energy, and energy the supporter of truth. If we rise to the Greek language, the most eloquent man on record—Pericles—introduced the double T instead of the double S; and it was enamelled on that golden language to adorn the eloquence of Aspasia, and to shine among the graces of Alcibiades. Socrates bent his thoughtful head over it, and it was observed in the majestic march of Plato. At the same time, Thucydides and the tragedians, together with Aristophanes, contributed to form, or united to countenance, the *Middle Attic*. One would expect that elegance, and Atticism herself, might have rested and been

contented. No: Xenophon, Plato, Æschines, Demosthenes, were promoters of the *New Attic*, altering and softening many words in the spelling. With such men before me, I think it to be deeply regretted that coxcombs and blockheads should be our only teachers, where we have much to learn, much to obliterate, and much to mend.

Johnson. Follow your betters, sir!

Tooke. Such is my intention: and it is also my intention that others shall follow theirs.

Johnson. Obey the majority, according to your own principles. You[8] reformers will let nothing be great, nothing be stable. The orators you mention were deluders of the populace.

Tooke. And so were the poets, no doubt: but let us hope that the philosophers and moralists were not, nor indeed the writers of comedy. Menander was among the reformers; so was Plautus at Rome: the most highly estimated for his rich Latinity by Cicero and all the learned. Our own language had, under the translators of the Bible and of the Liturgy, reached the same pitch as the Latin had in the time of Plautus; and the sanctitude of Milton's genius gave it support, until the worst of French invasions overthrew it. Cowley, Sprat, Dryden, imported a trimmer and succincter dress, stripping the ampler of its pearls and bullion. Arbuthnot and Steele and Swift and Addison added no weight or precision to the language, nor were they choice in the application of words. None of them came up to their French contemporaries in purity and correctness; and their successors, who are more grammatical, are weak competitors with the rival nation for those compact and beautiful possessions. De Foe has a greater variety of powers than they, and he far outstrips in vigor and vivacity all the other pedestrians who started with him. He spells some words commendably, others not. Of the former are *onely*, *admitt*, *referr*, *supplie*, *relie*, *searcht*, *wisht*; of the latter, *perticulars*, *perusall*, *speciall*, *vallues*. Hurd, very minute and fastidious, in like manner writes often reprehensibly, though oftener well. Do you tolerate his "*catched*"?

Johnson. Sir, I was *teached* better.

Tooke. He also writes "under these circumstances."

[8 First ed. continues p. 363, l. 13. From "The" to "yesterday" (62 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

Johnson. Circumstances are things *round about;* we are *in* them, not *under* them.

Tooke. We find "those who *had* rather *trust* to the equity" for "*would* rather." I believe he is the last writer who uses the word *wit* for *understanding*, although we continue to say, "he is out of his *wits*." He very properly says *encomiums*, to avoid a Grecism. We never say "rhododendra," but "rhododendrons." In our honest Old English all's well that ends well, and *encomiums*, *phenomenons*, *memorandums*, sound thoroughly and fully English. Hurd is less so in his use of the word *counterfeit*, which we are accustomed to take in an unfavorable sense. "Alexander suffered none but an Appelles and a Lysippus to *counterfeit* the form and features of his person." The sentence is moreover lax. I am glad, however, to find that he writes *subtile* instead of *subtle*. He has the merit, too, of using *hath* instead of *has* in places, but is so negligent as to omit it sometimes before a word beginning with *s*, or *ce* and *ci*, and *ex*. This is less bad than before *th*. Like Middleton, he writes *chast*.

Johnson. Improperly. Nobody writes *wast* for *waste*. In all such words the vowel is pronounced long, which his spelling would contract. Dr Hurd writes plainly, and yet not ignobly. His criticisms are always sensible, never acute; his language clear, but never harmonious.

Tooke. We cease to look for Eloquence; she vanished at the grave of Milton.

Johnson. Enough of Milton! Praise the French, sir! A republican is never so much at his ease as among slaves.

Tooke. We must lead happy lives then. But you were pleased to designate us as enemies to greatness and stability. What is it I admire in Milton but the greatness of his soul and the stability of his glory? Transitory is every thing else on earth. The minutest of worms corrodes the throne; a slimier consumes what sat upon it yesterday. I know not the intentions and designs of others: I know not whether I myself am so virtuous that I should be called a republican, or so intelligent that I should be called a reformer. In regard to stability, I do however think I could demonstrate to you that what has a broad basis is more stable than what has a narrow one, and that nothing is gained to solidity by top-heaviness. In regard to greatness, I

doubt my ability to convince you. Much in this is comparative. Compared with the plain, the mountains are indeed high; compared with what is above them in the universe of space, they are atoms and invisibilities. Such too are mortals. I do not say the creatures of the cannon-foundry and the cutlery; I do not say those of the jeweller and toyman, from whom we exclude light as from infants in a fever, and to whom we speak as to drunken men to make them quiet,—but the most intellectual we ever have conversed with. What are they in comparison with a Shakspeare, or a Bacon, or a Newton? You, however, seemed to refer to power only. I have not meditated on this subject so much as you have, and my impression from it is weaker; nevertheless I do presume to be as hearty and as firm a supporter of it, removing (as I would do) the incumbrances from about it, and giving it ventilation.

Johnson. Ventilation! yes, forsooth, from the bellows of Brontes and Steropes and Pyracmon.

Tooke. Come, Doctor, let us throw a little more dust on our furnace, which blazes fiercelier than our work requires. The word *firy* comes appositely: why do we write it *fiery*, when *wire* gives *wiry?* The[9] word rushes into my mind out of Shakspeare,—

> "And the *delighted* spirit
> To bathe in *fiery* floods."

Truly, this would be a very odd species of delight. But Shakspeare never wrote such nonsense; he wrote *belighted* (whence our *blighted*), struck by *lightning:* a fit preparation for such bathing. Why do we write *lieutenant*, when we write, "I would as *lief*"? Would[10] there be any impropriety or inconvenience in writing endevor and *demeanor* as we write *tenor*, omitting the *u*?

Johnson. Then you would imitate cards of invitation, where we find *favor* and *honor*.

Tooke. We find *ancestor* and *author* and *editor* and *inventor* in the works of Dr Jonson, who certainly bears no resemblance to a card of invitation. Why cannot we place all these words on the same bench? Most people will give us credit for knowing that they are derived from the Latin; but the wisest will think us

[9 From "The" to "bathing" (7 lines) added in 3rd ed.]
[10 From "Would" to "rust" (46 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

fools for ending them like *hour*, *sour*, and *flour*, pronounced so differently. I look upon it as a piece of impudence to think we can correct the orthography of such writers as Selden and Milton. They wrote not only *honor*, *favor*, *labor*, but likewise *brest*, *lookt*, and *unlookt-for*, *kinde*, *minde*. To spell these differently, is a gross absurdity.

Johnson. By removing a single letter from the holy word *Saviour*, you would shock the piety of millions.

Tooke. In that word there is an analogy with others, although the class is small: *paviour* and *behaviour*, for instance.

Johnson. It now occurs to me that *honor* was spelled without the *u* in the reign of Charles I., with it under his successor. Perhaps *armour* should be *armure*, from the low Latin *armatura*.

Tooke. If we must use such words as *reverie*, why not oblige them to conform with their predecessors, *travesty* and *gaiety*, which should have the *y* instead of the *i*. When we, following Cowley, write *pindarique*, we are laughed at; but nobody laughs at *picturesque* and *antique*, which are equally reducible to order.

Johnson. It is an awful thing to offend the Genius of our language. We cannot spell our words as the French spell theirs. No other people in the world could reduce to nothing so stiff and stubborn a letter as *x*, which they could do in *eaux*.

Tooke. We never censure them for writing *carême*, which they formerly wrote *caresme*, more anciently *quaresme*, and other words similarly; yet they have one language for writing, another for speaking, and effect a semblance of grammatical construction by a heap of intractable letters. While three suffice with us (*a*, *m*, *a*), they use eight (*aimaient*), of which the greater part not only are unprofitable, but would, in any language on earth, express a sound, or sounds, totally different from what they stand for: r, s, t, end words whose final sound is our a. We never censure the Italians for writting *ricetto*, as they pronounce it, without a p, and *benedetto* without a c; we never shudder at the danger they incur of losing the traces of derivation. The most beautiful and easy of languages assumes no appearance of strength by the display of harshness, nor would owe his preservation to rust. Let us always be analogical when we can be so without offence to pronunciation. There are some few words in which we are retentive of the Norman laws. We write *island* with an

s, as if we feared to be thought ignorant of its derivation. If we must be reverential to custom, let it rather be in the presence of the *puisne* judge. There are only the words *puisne*, *isle*, *island*, *demesne*, *viscount*, and the family name *Grosvenor*, in which an *s* is unsounded. I would omit it in these.[11] The French have set us an example here, rejecting the useless letter. They also write *dette*, which we write "debt." I know not why we should often use the letter b where we do. We have no need of it in *crumb* and *coomb*; the original words being without it.

Johnson.[12] King Charles I. writes *dout*. In the same sentence he writes *wherefor*.* But to such authority such men as you refuse allegiance even in language. Your *coomb* is sterile, and your *crumb* is dry; as such minutenesses must always be.

Tooke. So are nuts; but we crack and eat them. They are good for the full, and for those only.

Johnson. The old writers had strange and arbitrary ways of spelling, which make them appear more barbarous than they really are. There[13] are learned men who would be grieved to see removed from words the traces of their origin.

Tooke. There are learned men who are triflers and inconsiderate. Learning, by its own force alone, will never remove a

[11] Foot note in 2nd ed. reads: "I rejoice in this opportunity of paying my respects to Mr Mitford, living or dead. The only judicious thing I find in his history is the spelling of *iland*. His ignorance and falsehood are beyond all match and measure: several instances of each are to be found within a few pages, in his invective against Demosthenes. If he be living, I entreat our ministers to grant a pension, or to devise an appointment, in recompense of his hatred against the ancient liberties of his country: and if this should be inconvenient, to recommend him to the Pacha of Egypt as the most proper officer to remove from their native soil the wives, daughters, and infant-sons, of the Greeks; praying that he may be confirmed in his situation, until a sufficient number of Nubians and Arabs be put into quiet and legitimate possession of the Peloponnesus, and until envoys have arrived from the Christian Kings and princes to reside near such regular government, as the wisdom of their brother and cousin shall have established under God, for the happiness of his people."]

[12] Second ed. reads: "*Johnson.* This is dry. *Tooke.* So," &c.]

* Letter to P. Rupert. See Forster's Life of Cromwell, in his *Statesmen of the Commonwealth*.

[13] From "There" to "innovation" (169 lines) added in 3rd ed. Second ed. reads: "are. Tooke. You have now brought me to a question, which if you will favour me, we will discuss. I perceive," &c.]

prejudice or establish a truth. Of what importance is it to us that we have derived these words from the Latin through the French? We do not preserve the termination of either. Formerly if many unnecessary letters were employed, some were omitted. *Ea* and *oa* were unusual. In various instances the spelling of Chaucer is more easy and graceful and elegant than the modern. He avoids the diphthong in *coat, green, keen, sheaf, goat;* writing *cote, grene, kene, shefe, gote.* Sackville, remarkable for diligence and daintiness of composition, spells "delights" *delites*, and "shriek" *shreek.* He also writes *bemone, brest, yeeld.* What we foolishly write *work* was formerly spelled *werke*, as we continue to pronounce it. Formerly there was such a word as *shew:* we still write it, but we pronounce it *show*, and we should never spell it otherwise. There is another of daily occurrence which we spell amiss, although we pronounce it rightly. *Coxcomb* in reality is *cockscomb*, and Ben Jonson writes it so, adding an *e.* He who first wrote it with an *x* certainly did not know how to spell his own name. In a somewhat like manner we have changed our *pennies* into *pence*, and our *acquaintants* into *acquaintance.* Now, what have these gained by such exchange? Latterly we have run into more unaccountable follies; such as *compel* for *compell*, and I have seen *inter* for *interr.* Nobody ever pronounces the last syllables of these words short, as the spelling would indicate. You would be induced to believe such writers are ignorant, that their *inter* and our *enter* are of a different stock. In the reign of Charles I. *parliament* was usually, though not universally, spelled *parlement:* how much more properly! What we write *door* and *floor*, the learned and judicious Jonson wrote *dore* and *flore.* I find in his writings *cotes, profest, partrich, grone, herth, theatre, fóarrine, diamant, phesants, mushromes, banisht, rapt, rackt, addrest, ake, spred, stomack, plee, strein*, (song), *windore fild*, (filled), *moniment, beleeve, yeeld, scepter, sute* (from sue), *mist* (missed), *crackt, throte, yong, harbor, harth, oke, cruze, crost, markt, minde* (which it is just as absurd to write *mind* as it would be to write *time tim*), *taught, banisht, cherisht, heapt, thankt.* It is wonderful that so learned a man should be ignorant that *spitals* are hospitals. He writes: "Spittles, post-houses, hospitals." Had he spelled the first properly, as he has done all the other words, he could not have made this mistake. Fairfax writes *vew, bow* (bough),

milde, *winde*, *oke*, *spred*, *talkt*, *embrast*. Fleming, in his translation of the Georgics, *ile*, *oke*, *anent* (which later word, now a Scotticism, is used by Philemon Holland), *gote*, *feeld*, *yeeld*, *spindel*. Drayton, and most of our earlier writers, instead of *thigh*, write *thie*. Milton in the Allegro,—

"Where the bee with honied *thie*."

I perceive that you yourself, in your letter to Lord Chesterfield, have several times written the word *til*; and I am astonished that the propriety of it is not generally acknowledged after so weighty an authority. *Sent*, for *scent*, is to be found in old writers, following the derivation. There are several words now obsolete which are more elegant and harmonious than those retained instead. *Gentleness* and *idleness* are hardly so beautiful as Chaucer's *Gentilesse* and *idlesse*. We retain the word, *lessen*, but we have dropped *greaten*. Formerly good authors knew its value.

I wish I were as sure that

Multa renascentur quæ jam cecidere,

as I am that

cadentque
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula.

I am unacquainted with any language in which, during the prosperity of a people, the changes have run so seldom into improvement, so perpetually into impropriety. Within another generation, ours must have become so corrupt, that writers, if they hope for life, will find it necessary to mount up nearer to its sources.

Johnson. And what will they do when they get there? The leather from the stiff old jerkin will look queerly in its patches on the frayed satin.

Tooke. Good writers will suppress the violence of contrast. They will rather lay aside what by its impurity never had much weight, than what has lost it by the attrition of time; and they will be sparing of such expressions as are better for curiosities than for utensils. You and I would never say "by *that* means" instead of *these*; nor "*an* alms": yet Addison does. He also says a "*dish* of coffee;" yet coffee never was

offered in a dish, unless it was done by the fox to the crane after the dinner he gave her. We hear of our *lyrical* poetry, of our *senate*, of our *manes*, of our *ashes*, of our *bards*, of our British *Muse*. Luckily the ancients could never run into these fooleries; but their judgment was rendered by discipline too exact for the admission of them. Only one valuable word has been received into our language since my birth, or perhaps since yours. I have lately heard *appreciate* for *estimate*.

Johnson. I am an anti-Gallican in speech as in sentiments. What we have fairly won from the French let us keep, and avoid their new words like their new fashions. Words taken from them should be amenable, in their spelling, to English laws and regulations. *Appreciate* is a good and useful one; it signifies more than *estimate* or *value:* it implies to "value *justly*." All words are good which come when they are wanted; all which come when they are not wanted should be dismissed.

Tooke. Let us return from new words to the old spellings of Benjamin Jonson, which other learned men followed: *deprest*, *speke*, *grete*, *fede*, *reson*, *reper*, *sheves*, *relefe*, *leve*, *grene*, *wether*, *erthe*, *breth*, *seke*, *seson*, *sege*, *meke*, *stepe*, *rome*, *appere*, *dere*, *throte*, *tothe*, *betwene*, *swete*, *deth*, *hele*, *chere*, *nere*, *frende*, *tretise*, *teche*, *conceve*, *tonge*, *bere*, *speche*, *stere*. Altogether there are about forty words, out of which the unnecessary diphthong is rejected. He always omits the s in *island* and *isle;* he writes *sovrane*, *subtil*, *childe*, and *werke*. He would no more have written *sceptre* than *quivre*.

Johnson. Milton, too, avoided the diphthong; he wrote *drede* and *redy*. Mandevile wrote *dede*, and *grane* of incense.

Tooke. You tell us that the letter *c* never ends a word according to English orthography; yet it did formerly both in words of Saxon origin and British, as *Eric*, *Rod-eric*, *Caradoc*, *Madoc*. *Wenlock*, the name of a town in Shropshire, formerly ended in *c*, and Hume always writes Warwic.

Johnson. Sir, do not quote infidels to me. Would you write *sic* and *quic?*

Tooke. I would, if we derived them from the Greek or Latin.

Johnson. Without the authority of Ben Jonson, on whom you so rely?

Tooke. There is in Jonson strong sense, and wit too strong; it wants airiness, ease, and volatility. I do not admire his cast-iron ornaments, retaining but little (and that rugged and coarse-grained) of the ancient models, and nothing of the workmanship. But I admire his judgment in the spelling of many words, and I wish we could return to it. In others, we are afraid of being as English as we might be and as we ought to be. Some appear to have been vulgarisms which are no longer such. By vulgarism I mean what is unfounded on ratiocination or necessity: for instance, *underneath.*

Johnson. Our best writers have used it.

Tooke. They have, and wisely; for it has risen up before them in sacred places, and it brings with it serious recollections. It was inscribed on the peasant's grave-stone, long before it shone amid heraldic emblems in the golden lines of Jonson, ushering in

"Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother."

Beside, it is significant and euphonious. Either half conveys the full meaning of the whole. But it is silly to argue that we gain ground by shortening on all occasions the syllables of a sentence. Half a minute, if indeed so much is requisite, is well spent in clearness, in fulness, and pleasurableness of expression, and in engaging the ear to carry a message to the understanding. *Whilst* is another vulgarism which authors have adopted, the last letter being added improperly. *While* is "the *time* when;" *whiles* "the *times* when."

Johnson. I am inclined to pay little attention to such fastidiousness; nor does it matter a straw whether we use the double *e*, instead of *ete*, in *sweet*, and the other words you recited from good authors. But I now am reminded that *near* is *nigher*, by Sir Thomas More writing "*never* the *nere.*" However, you are not to suppose that I undervalue the authority of Benjamin Jonson. I find sometimes his poetry unsatisfactory and troublesome; but his prose is much better, and now and then almost harmonious, which his verses never are for half-a-dozen lines together.

Tooke. I know little about poetry; but it appears to me that

in his, where he has not the ague he has the cramp. Nearly all his thoughts are stolen. The prettiest of his poems,

"Drink to me only with thy eyes,"

is paraphrased from Scaliger's version of Aristænetus. He collected much spoil from his campaign in the Low Countries of Literature. However, his English for the most part is admirable; and was justly looked up to until Milton rose, overshadowing all England, all Italy, and all Greece. Since that great man's departure, we have had nothing (in style, I mean) at all remarkable. Locke and Defoe were the most purely English; and you yourself, who perhaps may not admire their simplicity, must absolve them from the charge of innovation. I perceive that you prefer the spelling of our gentlemen and ladies now flourishing to that not only of Middleton but of Milton.

Johnson. Before[14] I say a word about either, I shall take the liberty, sir, to reprehend your unreasonable admiration of such writers as Defoe and Locke. What, pray, have they added to the dignity or the affluence of our language?

Tooke. I would gladly see our language enriched as far as it can be without depraving it. At present, we recur to the Latin and reject the Saxon. This is strengthening our language just as our empire is strengthened, by severing from it the most flourishing of its provinces. In another age, we may cut down the branches of the Latin to admit the Saxon to shoot up again; for opposites come perpetually round. But it would be folly to throw away a current and commodious piece of money because of the stamp upon it, or to refuse an accession to an estate because our grandfather could do without it. A book composed of merely Saxon words (if indeed such a thing could be) would only prove the perverseness of the author. It would be inelegant, inharmonious, and deficient in the power of conveying thoughts and images, of which indeed such a writer could have but extremely few at starting. Let the Saxon, however, be always the groundwork.

Johnson. Is Goldsmith plain and simple enough for you?

Tooke. I prefer him to all our writers now living; but he has faults such as we do not find in less men. Louth, for instance,

[14 From "Before" to "alone" (35 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

and Hurd. In his *Essay on the Present State of Polite Literature*, he thus terminates a sentence: "Without a friend to drop a tear on their *unattended obsequies*." Now what are *obsequies* but funeral attendance? And surely he is a bad philosopher and a worse historian who says,—

> "A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
> When every rood of ground maintained its man."

There never was any such time; and, if ever there should be, we who believe that "England's griefs" have more than begun already, are fortunate in being born at the present day.

Johnson. He writes more correctly than Middleton; so let him alone. Middleton is not so correct a writer as you fancy. He was an infidel, sir, and, what is worse, a scoffer. He[15] wants the sweetness of Pope and Addison, the raciness of Dryden and Cowley, the compression of Swift and Hobbes, the propriety and justness and elevation of Barrow, the winning warmth and affectionate soul of Jeremy Taylor, the terseness of Junius, the vivacity of Burke, clinging to a new idea like a woodbine to a young tree, till he embraces every part of it and overtops it.

Tooke.[16] I was apprehensive of your insisting that we have

[15 From "He" to "it" (7 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

[16 First ed. reads: "*Tooke.* You will acknowledge that we have nothing. . . . *Cicero*, nothing at once so harmonious and so unaffected. *Johnson.* Do you assert that Isaac Walton, who also wrote biography, is not equally unaffected? *Tooke.* Unaffected he is, and equally so, but surely less harmonious. Allow me to join in admiration of this most natural writer and most virtuous man, whose volumes I read with greater pleasure than any excepting Shakspeare's. There is indeed, as you appear to indicate, no similitude between them; no more, I confess it, than there is between a cowslip and the sun that shines upon it; but there is a perpetually pleasant light, if I may use the expression, reflected from every thought and sentence, and no man ever read him without being for the time both happier and better. I, like yourself have detected a few inaccuracies," &c. Second ed. reads: "*Tooke.* You will acknowledge . . . Shakspeare's. *Johnson.* This would appear an absurdity, to those who are ignorant that the wisest books do not always please most the wisest men; and that if there are some which we want in our strength, there are others which we want in our infirmities. Fortunate is he who in no hour of relaxation or of idleness takes up to annex or pamper it, a worse book than Walton. *Tooke.* There is indeed, as you appear to indicate, no similitude between Walton and Shakspeare: no more, I confess it inaccuracies."]

nothing so classical in our language as the *Life of Cicero;* for such, I understand, is the opinion of our scholars at the Universities. I have detected many inaccuracies in Middleton; not in his reasonings and conclusions, for in these he is clear and strong, but in expression. He says, in his *Letter from Rome*, "the temple of some heathen deity, *or* that of the Paphian Venus," as if the Paphian Venus was not a heathen deity. "Popery, *which* abounds with instances of the grossest forgeries both of saints and reliques, *which* have been *imposed for genuine*," &c. To have been *forgeries*, they must have been *imposed for genuine:* here is also a confusion in the repetition of *which*, relating to two subjects; as again, "The prejudices *which* the authority of so celebrated a writer may probably *inject* to the disadvantage of my argument, *which*," &c.

Johnson. If Warburton had been as discerning in language as he was acute in argument, he would have exposed to ridicule the expression, "*inject a prejudice.*"

Tooke. His acuteness seems usually to have forsaken him the moment he lost his malignity. As[17] some beasts muddy the water by tramping it before they drink, so nothing is palatable to Warburton but what he has made turbid. Nothing is weaker than his argument on this question, nothing more inelegant than his phraseology. In another place, he writes "*de*nounced" for "*an*nounced." Our pugnacious bishop, although he defended the divine legation of Moses, would have driven the chariot of Pharaoh against him into the Red Sea. He says in reference to Middleton, "How many able writers have employed *their* time and learning to prove Christian Rome to have borrowed *their* superstitions from the pagan city!" He means *her* superstitions, and not the superstitions of the *able writers*, which the words, as they stand, designate. He surely could not dissent from Middle-

[17 From "As" to "turbid" (3 lines) added in 3rd ed. First ed. reads: "phraseology. Our pugnacious . . . sea. You remember the verses. I know not by whom.

If Warburton should chance to meet
The twelve apostles in the street,
He'd pick a quarrel with them all
And shove his Saviour from the wall.

He says," &c.]

ton, with whom nearly all the papists agree; drawing, however, far different inferences.

Johnson. On this ground I go with Middleton;[18] he states a historical fact; he states a thing visible: but while he pretends to approach Religion for the sake of looking at her dress, he stabs her. Come, sir! come, sir! philology rather than this.

Tooke. A little more, then, of philology; but first, let me suggest to you that no such stab, my good Doctor, can inflict a dangerous wound on Truth. Homer had probably the design of impressing some such sentiment, when he said that gashes in celestial bodies soon unite again. If you have ever had the curiosity to attend a course of lectures on chemistry, or have resided in the house of any friend who cultivates it, you may perhaps have observed how a single drop of colorless liquid, poured on another equally colorless, raises a sudden cloud and precipitates it to the bottom: so, unsuspected falsehood, taken up as pure and limpid, is thrown into a turbid state by a drop; and it does not follow that the drop must be of poison.

I[19] wish it were possible on all occasions to render the services we owe to criticism, without the appearance of detracting from established or from rising reputations. Since, however, the judicious critic will animadvert on none whose glory can be materially injured by his strictures,—on none whose excellence is not so great and so well founded that his faults in the comparison are light and few,—the labor is to be endured with patience. For it is only by this process that we can go on from what is good to what is perfect. I am in the habit of noting down the peculiarities of every book I read; and, knowing that I was to meet you here, I have placed in the fold of my sleeve such as I once collected out of Middleton.

Johnson. I shall be gratified, sir, by hearing them; and

[18] The style of Middleton is frequently commended by writers of the last century; and this may account for the attention Landor gives to an author, whom few read now. To Landor he was well known. Dr Parr admired him and recorded his admiration in the edition of Bellendenus, which was his great work; and it may have been from Middleton's writings that Landor first acquired that indignant contempt for Catholicism, which the reader must have so often noticed.]

[19] From "I" to "rest" (23 lines) added in 2nd ed. First ed. continues p. 374, l. 22.]

much more than by dissertations, however rich and luminous, on his character and genius, which prove nothing else to me than the abilities of the dissertator.

Tooke. I will begin then with his orthography. He writes constantly *intire*, *onely*, *florish*, *embassador*, *inquire*, *genuin*, *tribun*, *troublesom*, *chast*, *hast* for *haste*, *wast* for *waste*.

Johnson. Pronouncing the three last as the common people do universally, and as others beside common people do in his native county, Yorkshire. I approve of the five first; I disapprove of the rest.

Tooke. We[20] who condemn the elision of the final *e* in these words, in which the pronunciation requires it, elide it where it must likewise be pronounced. Our better authors in a wiser age never wrote *find*, *mind*, *kind*, *blind*, without the final vowel.

Johnson. It is wonderful we ever should have consented to part with it, having once had it, and knowing its use.

Tooke. To return to Middleton. He writes *battel*, *sepulcher*, *luster*, *theater*.

Johnson. I do not blame him. Milton,[21] and most of our best scholars, have done the same. Addison saw at Verona the famous *theater*.

Tooke. He writes the verb *rebell* with a single *l*.

Johnson. The fault must surely be the printer's; and yet several final consonants have lately been omitted in our verbs, either by the ignorance and indifference of the writer, or by the unrebuked self-sufficiency of the compositor. I was unaware that the corruption began so early, and with a scholar.

Tooke. He writes *grandor* in preference to *grandeur*; the only word of the kind which we persist in writing as the French do. Their *honneur* and *faveur* are domesticated with us and invested with our livery, while the starveling *grandeur* is left alone like a swallow on the house-top, when all the others have flown away. *Grandor* sounds more largely and fully than that puny

[20 From "We" to "Middleton," (7 lines) added in 3rd ed.; from "He" to "theater" added in 2nd ed.]

[21 From "Milton to "theater" (3 lines) added in 2rd ed.; from "*Tooke*," to "writer" (4 lines) added in 2nd ed.; From "or" to "scholar," (3 lines) added in 3rd ed.; from "*Tooke*" to "grandeur," added in 2nd ed.; From "the" to "Middleton," (20 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

offspring of the projected jaw. The authority of Milton, were there no other and better, ought to eliminate so ungainly an anomaly; for *liqueur* is not yet Englished.

Johnson. No, sir! we have *dram*. But whatever we would be ashamed of expressing in English, we call in French.

Tooke. Of the three words *soup*, *group*, *troop*, borrowed from the French, there is only one which we have fairly naturalised. If *troop* is written with a double *o*, instead of *ou*, why should not the others?

Johnson. Why indeed?

Tooke. *Creature* has only two syllables, *creator* three. Why not write *creture*, as we pronounce it? correcting an anomaly so easily.

Now to go on again with Middleton. He[22] confuses *born* and *borne*; which indeed are of the same origin, but differently spelled in their different significations. As these two participles are the same, so are the two substantives *flower* and *flour*; which we may see the more plainly by removing them a little out of our own language, and placing them at the side of a cognate word in another. An academy of Tuscany, still in existence I think, entitled *Della Crusca*, chose for its emblem a sieve, and for its motto, *Il più bel fior ne coglie*.

Johnson. True enough; and now indeed I perceive the reason, indifferently versed as I am in the Italian language, why the members of that academy have been universally called, of late years, *coglioni*.

Tooke. Whenever I hear a gentleman addressed by that title, I shall bow to him as to a personage of high distinction, if I should travel at any time so far as Florence.

Johnson. Rightly judged, sir! A *coglione* in all countries is treated (I doubt not) with deference and respect.

Tooke. Middleton writes *clame*, *proclame*, *exclame* (I think, properly); as *pretense* and *defense*. He never uses the word *boast*, but *brag* instead of it; and the word *ugly*, in itself not elegant, most inelegantly. "There are many *ugly* reports about him," "which Cicero calls an *ugly* blow," "an *ugly* precedent," "an *ugly* disturbance broke out." He uses *proper*, too, as only the vulgar do. "Cicero never speaks of him with respect, nor of

[22] From "He" to "truly," (35 lines) added in 2nd.]

his government but as of a *proper* tyranny." "*A proper apotheosis.*"

Johnson. I did not imagine him to be so little choice in his expressions; you have collected a number that quite astonishes me.

Tooke. May I read on?

Johnson. Are there more still upon that small piece of paper? Pray satisfy my curiosity.

Tooke. Will you admit a *southsayer?*

Johnson. No, truly; although [23] in the days of Elizabeth many wrote it so.

Tooke. And many wrote them more idiomatically and more analogically than at present. What we write *monarch* and *tetrarch*, they wrote *monark* and *tetrark*, as we find in Aylmer and all the learned. Why should they be spelled like *arch* and *march* and *starch?*

Johnson. I agree with you: we did spell several words better in the reigns of Elizabeth and James than we do now. The learned were recognized then, and inferiors submitted to legitimate authority.

Tooke. Yet, Doctor, you inform us in your preface that if the authors who write *honor*, *labor*, *explane*, *declame*, &c., have done no good, they have done little harm, because few have followed them, and because they innovated little. In fact, the writers to whom you refer have not innovated at all, but have followed the best authorities, and attempted to do good by substituting the better for the worse. A man or a writer is not the less good because he is not followed. There was a time, we read, when all went wrong, excepting one family. Every one of the words you have cited was written by learned, harmonious, and (I will add) considerate and elegant writers, excepting *red*, to which two unnecessary letters were added; of these, the last has been rejected by universal consent. The double *d* was retained to distinguish the preterite of the verb from the adjective *red;* but the sense alone would always do that. Some other words are without the same advantage. We frequently find the adverb *still*, where it is doubtful whether it is an adverb or an adjective; for which reason, as well as for analogy, I would write *stil*. We

[23 From "although" to "*write*" (52 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

write *until*, and should, as you have done, write *til*. In the same preface, you inform us that "Our language has been exposed to the corruptions of ignorance and the caprices of innovation." This is true, and to an extent which few men have the organs to see clearly. You commend the spelling of *highth* by Milton; and at the same time you are reluctant to correct our worst anomalies, declaring your unwillingness to "disturb upon narrow views, or for minute propriety, the orthography of our fathers." But if our fathers were licentious, and encroached on the patrimony of our grandfathers, what is to be done? Would it not be well to recover, by any obvious and honest means, as much as may be? If my father was a hair-dresser, and chatted agreeably but wrote vilely, would it not be better to imitate my grandfather, who was a curate, and who spoke with seriousness and wrote with precision?

Johnson. Perhaps you are right. I have had my fling at Middleton; now take yours again.

Tooke. Do you prefer a Gallicism or a Latinism? However, you shall have both. "Not *obnoxious* to Clodius's law," for not *amenable*, *liable*, or *subject*. Then, "He dresses up in a clear and agreeable style;" then he goes on to "depreciate a *name*, so highly revered for its patriotism, and *whose* writings," &c. Now in what school-room was *name* ever taught to *write*. "The[24] senate had no stomach to meddle with an affair so delicate."

Johnson. The delicacy of a thing, in general, is no reason why the stomach is disinclined to meddle with it.

Tooke. "An oath which Cato himself, though he had publicly declared that he would never do it, was forced at last to swallow. He had digested many things against his will."

Johnson. He might have swallowed them against his will; but surely he must have been the more glad at having digested them, in proportion to their hardness. If he digested them against his will, the digestion could not have been forced nor

[[24] From "The" to "will" (7 lines) added in 2nd ed.; 1 line below, from "He" to "hardness" (3 lines) added in 3rd ed.; 2nd ed. reads: "*Johnson.* Then they could not have been hard of digestion. The evil . . . dining-room."]

difficult. The evil is, when we have the will and cannot do it! But I hope we may now leave the dining-room.

Tooke.[25] In Middleton's time, it was usual to call Cicero by the familiar name of *Tully*, and we continue to say *Tully's Offices*. A mere Englishman, and only to such should we think we are speaking when we speak in English, would never comprehend the meaning of the title.

Johnson. Why not call the book *Cicero on Moral Obligations*, or in one word, on *Duties?*

Tooke. It might deceive some purchasers, on seeing only the title-page. *Duties*, in our days, signify *taxes*. Whenever we talk of the duties simply and solely, the taxes are understood: these being the only duties which statesmen inculcate on the people. The Roman names have fared among us worse than the Greek. Several retain their full proportions. Mark Antony has no Roman feature: such a name is more applicable to an English coal-heaver or mackerel-crier, than to the great orator or the celebrated triumvir.

Johnson. In a translation from the Latin, wherever the Romans are introduced as speakers, I should think it more dignified to pronounce the names at full. I would not offer my money in a clipped and sweated state.

Tooke. We retain the folly of turning the Greeks into Romans, and ending in *us* what ought to end in *os;* as Anyt*us* and Melit*us*. This is absurder than naturalizing them at once. Are you inclined to look again at the coarseness and clumsiness of Middleton?

Johnson. Drag him out, by all means.

Tooke.[26] "I did not take him to be a rascal." "Such clauses were only bugbears." "The occasion was so pat." "Shall I do it, *says I*, in my own way?" and, two lines lower, "I will move the senate, then, *says I;*" and, three after, "So I thought, *says I.*" Cicero is the speaker! "*Cross* the Tyber," for *across*. "I *had* rather *have* him the comrade of Romulus than of the goddess Safety." "To try what fortunes he could *carve* for himself." "He seems to be hard *put to it* for a pretext." "Part *with without* regret." "*Dressing up* an impeach-

[25 From "*Tooke*" to "means" (26 lines) added in 3rd ed.]
[26 From "*Tooke*" to "*Tooke*" (16 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

ment." "If any other fate *expect me.*" "They would submit their conduct to the judgment of Cato, and deposit four thousand pounds *apiece* in his hands."

Johnson. *Apiece*, although Hooker has once applied the expression to men, ought never in such cases to be used instead of *each*. Its proper sense is of things salable, inert or alive; but rather of the inert.

Tooke. In[27] that case, it might do very well for his senate or ours. I find in most writers the word *each* used indiscriminately for *every*. This is wrong in prose: *each* ought never to be employed but in reference to persons or things mentioned before.

Johnson. I never heard that.

Tooke. It may be wrong; consider it. Middleton translates the word *innocens*, which, when spoken of military men, signifies their forbearance and moderation, into *innocent*,—a term quite ridiculous when thus applied in English. In Cato's letter to Cicero, about his intended triumph, we find it thrice. "Young *Cæsar flowed* from the source of my counsels." "What *flows* from the result."

Johnson. False metaphor!

Tooke. "If ever they *got the better.*" "To *give* the *exclusion.*" "Coming *forward towards.*"

Johnson. Redundant and very inelegant.

Tooke. He always writes *oft* instead of *often*.

Johnson. Poetry alone has this privilege.

Tooke. "The high office *which* you fill, and the eminent distinction *that* you bear."

Johnson. Much better without both *which* and *that*.

Tooke. He uses the superlative *freest*.

Johnson. Properly the word *free* has no comparative nor superlative: for all monosyllables are made dissyllables by them, which could not be in *freer* and *freest*. I[28] do not willingly write *re-establish* or *re-edify*. The better word for the one would be *restablish*, if *restore* and *refix* are inadequate; and for the other, *reconstruct*. It is bad enough to be affected; but it is intolerable to be at once affected and uncouth. Justly may he be laughed at

[27 From "In" to "ours" added in 3rd ed.; from "I" to "freest" (25 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

[28 From "I" to "rightly" (10 lines) and foot note, added in 3rd ed.]

who falls into that slough which with a troublesome mincing gait he would avoid. They who might be shocked at *reappear* as a dissyllable, tolerate *ideal* as one, and *real* as a monosyllable.* Yet they would pronounce *reality* and *ideality* rightly. Many[29] of Middleton's political and religious, and some of his moral and historical, reflections do not please me.

Tooke. A scholar, as he was, should never have countenanced the sentence of Valerius Maximus on Marius. "Arpinum," he says, "had the singular felicity to produce the most *glorious contemner*, as well as the most illustrious improver, of the arts and eloquence." A singular kind of felicity indeed! If this glory had had its followers, the greater part of the world would at this time have been a forest. He places strange and discordant ideas in close apposition. Speaking of Sylla, he says, "He employed himself particularly in *reforming the disorders* of the State, by putting his new *laws* in execution, and in *distributing the confiscated lands of the adverse party* among his legions: so that the republic seemed to be once more seated on a *legal basis*, and the laws and judicial proceedings began to flourish in the forum." Confiscation[30] is a pretty legal basis, no doubt. Here he brings me to the Rostra. *Rostra* must be plural: I wonder he wrote "*that* rostra." There is an idle and silly thought in the preface. Romulus, he tells you, seems to have *borrowed* the plan of his new State from the old government of Athens, as it was instituted by Theseus. What could Romulus know of Theseus or of Athens? The people were in the same state of civilization, had the same wants, and satisfied them alike. Romulus borrowed the houses, harvests, and wives of those near him: he borrowed no more from Athens than from 'Change-Alley. The laws of Solon were known to Numa first among the Romans,—

* We find in Byron "*real*" a monosyllable. Neither he nor any one else ever made "*reality*" a trisyllable. He caught it from a Scotch mother, quite uneducated. His grammar is very incorrect: for instance:

"Let *he* who made thee answer that."—*Cain.*

[29 From "Many" to "me" (3 lines) added in 2nd ed.; "*Tooke*" added in 3rd ed.; from "A" to "forum" (14 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

[30 From "Confiscation" to "rostra" (3 lines) added in 3rd ed. 2nd ed. reads "forum. *Tooke.* There is," etc. From "There is" to "Romans" (10 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

if [31] indeed Numa was a Roman, and not rather a Corinthian. The name seems fictitious.

Johnson. Leave politics alone; let history lie quiet. What I remarked, some time since, on comparatives and superlatives makes me desirous that we had a collection of Latin and English comparatives, the former terminating in the masculine and feminine by *ior*, the latter in *er*. It would show us at a glance to what words the Roman writers, and our own, thought it better to prefix *magis* and *more*, instead of the comparative by the termination; and we should see, what never occurred to me until now, that the ancient and elegant chose the simpler mode preferably. Middleton, whom you have been quoting and examining so attentively, writes *honester*, *modester*: Milton, *virtuousest*.

Tooke. With all my veneration for this extraordinary and exemplary man, I would never use the word; and with all the preference I give, whenever it can be given, to the comparative formed by the final syllable, I never would admit it, nor the superlative, in words ending with *ous*: such as *virtuous*, *pious*, *religious*.

Johnson. Nor I, truly; but perhaps our contemporaries are somewhat too abstemious in words to which it might be more gracefully adapted.

Tooke. Middleton writes "for good and all." This is somewhat in the manner of your friend Edmund Burke, who uses the word *anotherguess*; in which expression are both vulgarity and ignorance: the real term is *another-guise*; there is nothing of *guessing*. Beside[32] *another-guise* we have *another-gates*:

> "When Hudibras about to enter
> Upon *anothergates* adventure," &c.

Johnson. Edmund Burke, sir, is so violent a reformer that I am confident he will die a Tory. I am surprised that any thing he does or says should encounter your disapprobation. He, sir, and Junius should have been your favorites, if indeed they are not one and the same; for Edmund writes better when he writes for another, and any character suits him rather than his own. Shenstone, when he forgot his Strephons and Corydons and followed

[31 From "if" to "fictitious" (2 lines) added in 3rd ed. From "Johnson" to "Tooke" (21 lines) added in 2nd ed. First ed. reads: "*Tooke* Middleton is once or twice vulgar: he writes," etc.]

[32 From "Beside" to "adventure" (3 lines) added 3rd ed.]

Spenser, became a poet. Your[33] old antagonist, Junius, wears an elegant sword-knot, and swaggers bravely. What think you?

Tooke.[34] His words are always elegant, his sentences always sonorous, his attacks always vigorous, and rarely (although I may be a sufferer by admitting it) misplaced. However, those only can be called great writers, who bring to bear on their subject more than a few high faculties of the mind. I require in him, whom I am to acknowledge for such accuracy of perception, variety of mood, of manner and of cadence; imagination, reflection, force, sweetness, copiousness, depth, perspicuity. I require in him a princely negligence of little things, and a proof that, although he seizes much, he leaves much (alike within his reach) unappropriated and untouched. Let me see nothing too trim, nothing quite incondite. Equal solicitude is not to be exerted upon all ideas; some are brought into the fulness of light, some are adumbrated: so, on the beautiful plant of our conservatories, a part is in fruit, a part in blossom; not a branch is leafless, not a spray is naked. Then come those graces and allurements, for which we have few and homely names, but which among the ancients had many, and expressive of delight and of divinity,—*lepores*, *illecebræ*, *veneres*, &c. These, like the figures that hold the lamps on staircases, both invite us and show us the way up; for, write as wisely as we may, we cannot fix the minds of men upon our writings, unless we take them gently by the ear.

Johnson. On this we meet and agree; but you exact too much. You include too many great properties within your stipulations.

Tooke. Several of these in Junius were uncalled for; some that would have been welcome were away; and he is hardly a great writer in whom any thing that is great is wanting.

Johnson. Sometimes even Cicero himself is defective both in ratiocination and in euphony.

[33] See Stephen's life of Horne Tooke (I. 352) for an account of the letters which passed between Horne Tooke and Junius. The quarrel arose out of Tooke's quarrel with Wilkes, whose election as alderman of London Tooke opposed. Junius thereupon assailed him as a traitor to the cause of liberty; there was a brisk exchange of letters.]

[34] First ed. reads: "*Tooke.* Of Junius I would say little, for more reasons than one. His," &c.]

Tooke. It cannot be controverted that, even in this most eloquent author, there are sentences which might be better.

Johnson. For [35] instance, in the monkish canticle,—

> Bellum autem ita *suscipiatur*
> Ut nihil aliud nisi pax quæsita *videatur*.

Tooke. By writing *susceptum sit*, he would have avoided the censure he has here incurred too justly. Toward the end of his dialogue, *De Claris Oratoribus*, he runs into the tautology, "*Hic me dolor tangit; hæc me cura solicitat.*" Can any thing be more self-evident, and therefore more unnecessary to state and insist on, than *that those are worthy of friendship in whom there is a reason why they should be our friends?*—

> Digni autem sunt amicitiâ, quibus in ipsis inest causa cur diligantur:

or indeed much more so, than *that old age comes on by degrees;* which he expresses in words redundant with the letter *s*:—

> Sensim sine sensu ætes senescit.

And I wish I could think it were free from the ambition of an antithesis in the *sensim sine sensu.*

Johnson. He is the only Latin prose writer in whom you will find a pentameter:—

> Quid dominus navîs? eripietne suum?

And I doubt whether in any other the tenses of *possum* are repeated seven times in about fourteen lines,* as they are here, with several of the same both before and after.

Tooke. This [36] pentameter is not his only one.

Johnson. Stop there. We write pentameter with the *e*

[35 From "For" to "justly" (5 lines) added in 2nd ed.; from "Toward" to "solicitat" (3 lines) added in 3rd ed.; "can" to "after" (16 lines) added in 2nd ed. In 2nd ed. *Johnson* speaks the whole of this addition.]

* *De Officiis*, l. ii., beginning at the close of the paragraph, "Adde ductus aquarum," &c.

[36 From "This" to "deserved" (26 lines) added in 3rd ed. 2nd ed. reads: "*Tooke.* Let us try to think as rightly as Cicero and to express our thoughts," etc.]

before the *r*, and *metre* inversely. I throw out this fresh bone to you in my largess.

Tooke. In the third book, *De Oratore*, where he reproves the fault, he commits it. If you never have remarked the passage, you will wonder at finding both a hexameter and pentameter and in sequence :—

> Complexi plus multo etiam videsse videntur
> Quam quamtum nostrorum ingeniorum acies, &c.

Milton puts several verses together in his prose. At the conclusion of the second book of his *Treatise against Prelaty*, are nearly four of the most powerful and harmonious he ever wrote :—

> "When God commands to take the trumpet," &c.

In another place he likewise writes as prose,

> "The blessed meekness of his lowly roof,
> Those ever open and inviting doors," &c.

But these last, although good, fair verses, are only to the pitch of *Paradise Regained.*

Johnson. The dog barked at bishops; and Cicero praised those who slew his benefactor.

Tooke. We have nothing to do at present with the politics of either, although we have raised into a blaze the tenets of the one, and have slain more friends than the other ever conciliated or deserved. Let us try to[37] express our thoughts as clearly; we may then as easily pardon those who discover a few slight faults in our writings, as he would pardon us, were he living, for pointing them out in his. The two most perfect writers (I speak of style) are Demosthenes and Pascal; but all their writings put together are not worth a third of what remains to us of Cicero; nor can it be expected that the world will produce another (for the causes of true eloquence are extinct) who shall write at the same time so correctly, so delightfully, and so wisely.

Johnson. Let him give way, sir, let him give way, for your rump-parliament and regicide. The causes of true eloquence are extinct! I understand you, sir: rump and regicide for ever!

[37 From "Let" to "his" (4 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

Tooke. Doctor, I am not one of those who would agitate so idle a question as, whether it is the part of a contemptible man, much less whether it is that of a criminal one, to scoff at superstitions forbidden by the religion of our country, or to punish with death and ignominy a torturer, a murderer, a tyrant, a violator of all his oaths and a subverter of all his laws!

Johnson. That sentence, sir, is too graceful for mouths like yours. *Burn, sink, and destroy,* are words of better report from the hustings.

Tooke. I presume you mean, Doctor, when they are directed by pious men against men of the same language and lineage: for words, like ciphers and persons, have their value from their place. I am sorry you seem offended.

Johnson. It is the nature of the impudent never to be angry.

Tooke. Impudence, I find, is now for the first time installed among the Christian virtues.

Johnson. No, sir; impudence is to virtue what cynicism is to stoicism. Nothing is harder or crueler; nothing seems less so.

Tooke. Doctor, let me present to you this cup of tea.

Johnson. Why! the man wears upon his mind an odd party-colored jacket, half courtier, half rebel. I do not think I have flattered him very much; yet he bowed as if he was suing me to dance with him.

I[38] can listen, sir, while you talk rationally: but I am angry that a gentleman of your abilities should be so inordinately fond of change. Do you think any thing correct in any author whatsoever?

Tooke. Once I was of opinion that nothing in Pascal could be corrected or improved: this opinion I have seen reason to change, still considering him more exact and elaborate than the best English writers. In the second sentence of his *Provincial Letters,* he says, "Tant d'assemblées d'une compagnie aussi célèbre qu'est la Faculté de Theologie à Paris, et où il s'est passé tant de choses *si extraordinaires* et *si* hors d'exemple, en font concevoir une *si* haute idee qu'on ne peut croire qu'il n'y en ait un sujet bien *extraordinaire.* Cependant vous serez bien

[38 From "I" to "whatsoever" (4 lines) added in 3rd ed. From "I" to end of Conversation is not in 1st ed.]

surpris, quand vous apprendrez par ce récit à quoi se termine un *si* grand eclat."

Johnson. These repetitions indeed appear inelegant.

Tooke. In the first sentence, a few lines above, he used *bien abusé*, and afterwards *bien important*. I shall make no observation on the disagreeable recurrence of sound in *surpris* and *récit*. Similar sounds have sometimes a good effect; but it must be an exquisite ear that distinguishes the proper time. Permit me to continue the period. "Et c'est ce que je vous dirai en peu de mots, après m'en être parfaitement instruit."

Johnson. Here I can detect no fault.[39]

Tooke. It lies in the reasoning: Pascal says plainly, "You will be much surprised, when you learn by my recital how such a bustle terminates; and I will tell you it in few words, when I am perfectly informed of it."

Johnson. I have not seen the error.

Tooke. How can Pascal say positively that his correspondent will be *much surprised* at the result of a thing which he is about to relate, when he himself does not well know what that result will be? That he does not, is evident; because he says he will tell him *after* he has discovered the matter of fact. He makes another promise too, rather hazardous: he promises that he will tell it in few words. Now, not seeing the extent of the information he may receive on it, few words perhaps might not suffice.

Johnson. I doubt whether the last objection be not hypercriticism.

Tooke. Better that than *hypocriticism*,—the vague and undisciplined progeny of our Mercuries, which run furiously from the porter-pot to the tea-pot, and then breathe their last. There can be no hypercriticism upon such excellent writers as Pascal. Few suspect any fault in him; hardly one critic in a century can find any. Impudence may perch and crow upon high places, and may scratch up and scatter its loose and vague opinions: this suits idlers; but *we* neither talk to the populace, nor stand in the sun pointing out what they heed not, and what they could never perceive.

[39 The fault is in Landor's mistranslation; Pascal says: "and I will tell it you in a few words, being already perfectly informed of it." Landor's knowledge of French often seems curiously imperfect.]

Another[40] fault of his comes into my recollection, and could never come more opportunely than after my expression of esteem for him. "C'est le motif de tous les hommes, jusqu' à ceux qui se tuent *et qui se pendent.*" As if he who hangs himself is different from him who kills himself, and has another motive. Were the volumes of Pascal before me, I might lay my finger on other small defects, some in expression, some in reasoning: and I should do it; for you would not suffer him to fall thereby in your esteem, nor even to mingle in the crowd of high literary names. He stands with few; and few will ever join him.

Johnson. Good scholars and elegant writers may sometimes lapse. Gray[41] is both; yet he says,—

"Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse," &c.

There were nine, mythologists tell us; but they have forgotten to inform us which was the unlettered one. We might as well talk of the powerless Jupiter, the lame Mercury, and the squinting Venus. In another poem, *the court was sat* is not English; nor is the note, in the *Ode to Music*, on Mary de Valence, "of whom tradition says that her husband:" tradition does not speak here

[40 From "Another" to "motive" (5 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[41 The following criticism upon Gray is an extension of that contained in Johnson's Life of Gray; but Johnson would never have objected to the "unlettered Muse;" indeed the line occurs in the four stanzas of which he says "the four stanzas beginning 'yet even those bones' are to me original . . . . Had Gray written often thus it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him." Tooke's suggestion that the Elegy would be made perfect by the exclusion of the second, the third, and the last nine stanzas exhibits at once Landor's nice sense of poetic style and the limitations of his critical method. Stanzas second and third are more artificial than the first, and add no new thoughts. This is true, but they have their place in the poem for that very reason; they suspend thought and vary feeling. In the case of the last nine stanzas again, there is a sudden drop from the general picture into a narrower subject, treated in an artificial manner. No reader can help feeling that the interest of the poem falls. But no one can therefore wish the stanzas away. Could Gray have given us a true portrait of his imagined poet, it would have been better; but destruction of a portion of an artistic whole is no remedy for the faulty execution of an essential portion. This Landor often forgets.]

of *her*, but of *the* husband. I[42] have attempted to demonstrate some improprieties of expression in other places.

Tooke. You are supposed by many inconsiderate readers to have been too severe on him.

Johnson. A critic is never too severe when he only detects the faults of an author. But he is worse than too severe when, in consequence of this detection, he presumes to place himself on a level with genius. A rat or a serpent can find a hole in the strongest castle; but they could about as much construct it as he could construct the harmonious period or "the lofty rhyme." Severity lies in rash exaggeration and impudent exposure. Such as fall into it cut their own fingers, and tie them up so clumsily as to make them useless. He who exults over light faults betrays a more notable want of judgment than he censures. Sir, have I been too minute in my examination of Gray?

Tooke. I think you have not; but I doubt whether you have assigned to him that place among the poets (I dare hardly say the men of genius) to which he is entitled. Expunge from his *Elegy* the second and third stanzas, together with all those which follow the words,—

"Even in our ashes live their wonted fires,"

and you will leave a poem with scarcely a blemish: a poem which will always have more readers than any other in any language. Every church-yard contains a monument of Gray inscribed with everlasting characters.

Johnson. You are enthusiastic for once.

Tooke. No poetry can make me that; and I am quite as sensible of Gray's imperfections as you are. He is often very harsh, and, what is wonderful in so laborious a composer, incorrect.

Johnson. Come hither, young lady! Have you Gray's poems? Go fetch them. Now, give them this gentlemen. Sir! you need not kiss her hand: she is not the queen.

Tooke. That graceful courtesy might have well deceived me.

Johnson. Sir! you make the girl blush.

[42 From "I" to "common" (85 lines) added in 3rd ed. 2nd ed. reads: "*Tooke.* Gray was a very learned man, and no mean poet. I wish he had not written," &c.]

Tooke. If so, I implore you not to look so steadfastly at her, pointing me out for so great a criminal.

Johnson. Whisper less loudly. She caught every syllable, and walked away smiling. And now she is standing before the fire, to lay all her blushes upon that.

Tooke. Doctor, you are surely the nicest of observers. Turn, if you please: here are the words we want:—

"Fair Venus' train."

Johnson. Ay, indeed, that is harsh enough.

Tooke.

"Yet hark how through the peopled air
The busy murmur glows."

Johnson. He might as well have said, *Hark!* what fantastic green palings and dingy window-shutters!

Tooke. "The azure flowers that blow," are precisely the azure flowers that never did blow.

"Hard unkindness' altered eye"

is harsh, ungrammatical, unpoetical, and worse than nonsense. If her eye were altered, it must be altered for the better.

"Gay Hope is theirs, by Fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possest."

Unless they possessed it, how is it theirs? He means the *object* of Hope, not Hope.

"Nor second he that *rode sublime*
Upon the seraph wings of ecstasy
The secrets of the abyss to spy."

This is just as if I should ride to Highgate or Harrow for the purpose of looking into the hold of a lighter on the Thames. Who would ride *sublime* to spy what lies low, even in an abyss, —particularly to spy its secrets? Speaking of Dryden he mentions his "*bright-eyed fancy.*" Vigorous sense and happy expression are the characteristics of Dryden, certainly not fancy.

"Thoughts that *breathe.*"

It is no great matter to say that of them.

"Loose his beard"

Beards were never tied up like the tails of coach-horses.

"Hark! how each giant oak and desert cave
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath;
O'er thee, O king, their hundred arms they wave."

Who wave their hundred arms? Why, the giant oaks, to be sure. True enough; but not the desert caves, nor the torrent's awful voice; and never was sighing more in vain than theirs.

"The thread is *spun*."

The thread must have been spun before they began *weaving*.

"And gorgeous dames and statesmen old
In bearded majesty appear."

What! the gorgeous dames too? Where were their scissors?

"Nor envy base, nor creeping gain,
Dare the Muse's walk to *stain*."

One would think he had before his eyes the geese on Wimbledon common. And I [43] wish he had not written

"Ah happy hills! ah pleasing shades!
Ah fields beloved in vain!"

Johnson. Why so? the verses are tender.

Tooke. In the next breath he tells us plainly that they were *not* beloved in vain; quite the contrary,—that they soothed his weary soul and breathed a second spring. When could he have more from them?

Johnson. Rent, sir, rent. I have graver things to adduce against him. He has dared to talk about the *star of Brunswick*.

Tooke. Doctor, I entreat you, as a lover of loyalty, to let every man be loyal in his own way. Obedience to the existing laws is a virtue; respect and reverence of misfortune is another. Only cast out from the pale of loyalty those who espouse the

[43 From "I" to "hammer" (27 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

interests of a part than of the whole. Whenever I see a person, whose connections are plebeian, strive and strain for aristocracy, I know what the fellow would have: he would sacrifice the interests of his friends and class for his own profit. Generosity may induce the high-born man to drop behind his family, and to concern himself in bettering the condition of those below him. Officiousness and baseness are the grounds on which the plebeian moves, who wrangles and fights for certain men more powerful enough without him. This is the counterfeit loyalty on which I would gladly see descend your reprobating stamp and hammer. The [44] star of Brunswick is no more censurable than the star of Brentford, and very like it both in brilliancy and magnitude.

Johnson. Return to philology: even Cicero himself, as we have seen, speaks incorrectly.

Tooke. Sometimes. Yet my estimation of his good sense and eloquence is undiminished by his inattention and negligence, which rarely occur, and on unimportant matters. The English use *infinity* for *innumerability*, which word he uses: and it is curious, as being the only word in the whole compass of Latinity which (with its enclitic) contains nine syllables. "Infinitatem locorum *innumerabilitatemque* mundorum." I never can think that the word *infinitior* is founded on reason. What is infinite cannot be *more* infinite. I do not object so strongly to *perfectissimus*: this is only a mode of *praising* what is perfect, which, like infinity, cannot be extended or increased. There are words, however, which neither in their sense nor their formation seem capable of a comparative or superlative. There [45] are properly no such words as *resistless*, *relentless*, *exhaustless*, which we often find not only in poetry but in prose; for all adjectives ending in *less*, of which the first to strike us authors is *moneyless*, are formed from substantives. Yet we cannot say *more* or *most* peer*less*; *more* or *most* penni*less*. We often find indeed a *most* care*less* servant, a *most* thought*less* boy; but the expression is at least inelegant and unhappy: I should even say vicious, if celebrated writers did not check and control me by their authority.

[44 From "The" to "magnitude" (2 lines) added in 3rd ed. Five lines below, from "The" to "mundorum" (4 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[45 From "There" to "Yet" (5 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

Johnson. Sir, this is quibbling.

Tooke. If correctness be the best part of eloquence, and as ninety-nine to a hundred in it, which I think it is, then this is no quibble. When our servants or tradesmen speak to us, it is quite enough that we understand them; but in a great writer we require exactness and propriety. Unless we have them from him we are dissatisfied, in the same manner as if the man who refuses to pay us a debt should offer us a present. I am ready for eloquence when I find correctness. You complain, and justly, of that affected and pedantic expression of Milton, where he says that Adam was the most comely of men ever born since, and Eve the fairest of her daughters.

Johnson. Ay, certainly.

Tooke. Yet you understand what he means. We [46] employ in our daily speech an expression equally faulty. We say, "You of all *others* ought not," &c. Now surely *you* are not one of *others*. Correctly spoken, the phrase would be, "You of all men." On reading Milton's verses the other day, I recollected a parallel passage in *Tacitus* on *Vespasian*: "Solus omnium *ante se* principum in melius mutatus:" and fancying that I had seen it quoted by La Rochefoucauld, I had the curiosity to inquire in what manner he translated it: for he leaves none without a French version. His words are, "Il fut le seul des empereurs, *ses prédécesseurs*, qui changea en mieux." Here we see how two acute men [47] pass over, without observing it, a preposterous perversion of language and plain sense.

Johnson. There are faults committed by pedants for the mere purpose of defending them.

[46 From "We" to "men" (5 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[47 Second ed. reads: "men that ever existed (for such they certainly were in the anatomy of the human heart), pass over," &c. Seven lines below, 2nd ed. reads: "*Tooke.* People far . . . expressions which excite our wonder more strongly still. They say commonly a *dead heat*, when horses reach the goal at once; a dead hand at such or such a thing, speaking of a man apparently the most alive and active. *Johnson.* Psha! vulgarisms! vulgarisms! *Tooke.* A proof of their extensive use. No expression," &c.]

Tooke. Writers far removed from pedantry use expressions which, if we reflect on them, excite our wonder.

Johnson. Better those than vulgarisms.

Tooke. There we disagree. No expression can become a vulgarism which has not a broad foundation. The language of the vulgar hath its source in physics,—in known, comprehended, and operative things; the language of those who are just above the vulgar is less pure, as flowing from what they do not in general comprehend. Hence the profusion of broken and ill-assorted metaphors, which we find in the conversation of almost all who stand in the intermediate space between the lettered and the lowest. I will go further, and venture to assert that you will find most of the expressions in daily use among ourselves to be ambiguous and vague. Your servant would say, *A man told me so:* the most learned and elegant of your acquaintance would probably say, on the same occasion, *A certain person informed me.* Here the person is not *a certain* but an *uncertain* one, and the thing told may have nothing in it of *information.* A farmer would say, *A deal of money for a galloway:* a minister of state, *A considerable sum,* speaking of the same. Reflection demonstrates clearly that, although the sum may have been the double of the value, it could not be an object of *consideration,* which word, however abused, is equivalent to *contemplation,* —another[48] word strangely degraded and misapplied. *Certain* then is *uncertain,* and *considerable* is *inconsiderable.* These words, you cannot fail to have observed, are the signs and figures whereby we denote the very two things which, in one form or other, are the most operative on the human mind,— magnitude and truth. As *considerable* is *inconsiderable,* and *certain* is *uncertain,* so *doubt* is used for *believe;* "I *doubt* you are wrong," is said, for "*I believe* you are wrong." This is elliptical. "I come to the conclusion, or the suspicion, by doubting on points about it, that you are wrong."

Johnson. We will return, at some future time, to the metaphysical of language. The[49] new and strange word, an *individ-*

[48] From "another" to "misapplied" added in 3rd ed. Five lines below, from "As" to "wrong" (5 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[49] From "The" to "particular" (2 lines) added in 3rd ed. Two lines

ual, seems rather to signify a *dividual* or *par*ticular. Pray tell me now, since you have always a word in defence of the vulgar, what the fools can mean by a *dead heat*, when racers reach the goal together, and a *dead hand*, speaking of a man apparently the most alive and active: as a *dead hand* at quoits or tennis?

Tooke. Add also *dead level*. *Dead* is *finished, accomplished;* in that sense the same as *deed: deed* is *fact*, and *fact* implies *certainty*. A *dead level* is an exact one.

Johnson. *Deed* however is no adjective.

Tooke. Nor is *net*, nor is *life;* yet we say a *net*-income and a *life*-interest. I have sometimes thought that *net* might be *neat*. I am however more inclined to believe that it means *purse* in this instance, a thing of the same texture; and my reason is that we say ordinarily, "He *netted* so much." Since[50] you have admitted me into court as advocate for the vulgar, let me remark that we laugh at those who pronounce an aspirate where there should be none; but are not we ourselves more ridiculous, who deliberately write it before words in which it never is pronounced? If we are to pronounce it, why put *an* to it?—as *an* honest, *an* honourable, *an* hour. The simple *a* denotes that it is wanted; as in *a* harp, *a* heart, *a* house, *a* home, *a* harness. Unprofitably do we employ *an* before words beginning with the aspirate; and much is it to be regretted that we see broken up and dissevered this household of familiar words. All that are aspirated should have *a* rather than *an* prefixed. There are other things also we often see in print, but never say: for instance, *an unicorn*, *an university*, *an use*, *an ewe*, *an yew-tree*. We properly say, *an only son;* improperly, *such an one:* because in *only* the *o* has simply its own sound, in *one* it sounds as if *w* were before it. Exactly half our vowels are occasionally consonants. Who would venture to say *an* year ago, or *an* youth, or *an yelping* cur, or *an yesterday's* newspaper?

Johnson. Proceed, sir, proceed: but I do not expect much regularity in your proceedings.

Tooke. Look on me as on a fox-hunter in the field. I cannot

below, from "when" to "together," and from "speaking" to "tennis" added in 3rd ed. *See* note 47.]

[50 From "Since" to "*fac-totum*" (50 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

go straightforward continually. At one time there is a quickset hedge before me; at another there are rotten stakes; here a deep ditch, there a quagmire, and farther onward a wide morass. I will mention words for your consideration as they arise before me, and not in such order as a grammar would require. We are walking in a forest, where the climate is genial, where the soil is rich, and where the fruits are growing wild: we will not at present take the trouble to assert them. As here you find a quince next to a cedar, and there peach-blossoms dropping on a yew, so here we may catch a substantive and an adverb close together, both ready for correction.

Johnson. Have it so, and go on.

Tooke. If we write *entrance*, why not *uttrance?* than which nothing can be expressed harsher. We should always write "enterance," were it only to make a distinction between this substantive and the verb *entrance.* Shakspeare has done it in *Macbeth:*—

> "The raven himself is hoarser[51]
> That croaks the fatal enterance of Duncan
> Under my battlements:"

and many other words on the same principle: for example, the verse in *All's Well that Ends Well:*—

> "And lasting in her sad rememberance."

Johnson. Shakspeare has indeed thus written; but what man dares always to be right?

Tooke. *Simile* is not an English word, nor a Latin one, as a substantive. *Simily* should replace it. But of all the inelegances in pages professedly English, *fac-simile* is the vilest; worse in its conformation than its twin-brother, *fac-totum.* In our language there are other parts of speech used somewhat promiscuously. Some verbs with us are French nouns and particles united. What think you of *engross?—en gros.* It means in one sense, as probably you have remarked in your *Dictionary*, what is written in *thick* characters by lawyers; in another, that appropriation to themselves of what is not theirs by right: attributing to the means (the engrossing, or writing in *thick* letters) what is done by the employer

[51 The word "hoarser" is an emendation of Landor's for hoarse *See* p. 242.]

of those means, the lawyer. Colloquially, and sometimes in graver business, we say, *on all sides*.

Johnson. Why not?

Tooke. How many sides have we? I should have believed that we had two only, if a certain compound did not twitch me by the skirt and lay claim to a third.

Johnson. Sir, a man has but two sides from which that expression could have been deduced; for *outside* and *inside* have nothing to do with it. They however show us that *side* in their case signifies *part;* and it has this signification when we say, *on all sides*. *Side*, in this sense, is the same as the Latin *situs*, the Italian *sito*. *Usum loquendi populo concessi.*

Tooke. Scientiam mihi reservavi. We have only two *halves;* yet we say on my *behalf*, on your *behalf*, and on his *behalf*, when the same matter is in litigation among three persons. Chaucer says, *On this halfe God*,—on this side of God; and *four halves*, four *sides*, as his interpreter expresses it.

Johnson.[52] Would you, who are a stickler for propriety, use such an expression as *somehow or other*, which we hear spoken and find written continually?

Tooke. I would not; because *somehow* expresses the whole meaning, and other *how* is not English. We, who are not vulgar, say *brother-in-law*, *son-in-law*, &c., wherein we appear to vie in folly with the French and Italians, and even to exceed them. An Italian calls *cognato* what we call *brother-in-law*, neither of which is true. He is not cognate to us, nor is he a brother by the laws. The *beaufrère* of the Frenchman is ludicrous; so is the *parent;* but not so much as our *grandson*, one day old. A Frenchman must speak more ridiculously still if he would speak of a horse-shoe made of any thing but iron: as Voltaire in *Zadig:* "Des fers *d'argent* à onze deniers de fin." From the same poverty and perversion of language, he attributes *sense* to dust or clouds: "Nuages agités en *sens* contraires," meaning *direction*. There[53] is also an odd expression for "I have it in my power,"—*Je suis à même:* oddness, but not corruption, as in many of ours. We say *coadjutor* where there is only one helper.

[52] From "*Johnson*" to "English" (5 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[53] From "There" to "ours" (3 lines) added in 3rd ed. One line below, from "And" to "verbs" (8 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

And there are expressions which in themselves are very incorrect, yet give an idea not to be mistaken: such for instance is, *Round your fireside.* You cannot be round a side.

Johnson. "Round the fire" would be better.

Tooke. Not at all. We cannot be round it in our houses, unless some of us are behind the chimney. We say, *Light the fire.* Nothing has less need of lighting. The Italians say, *Light the chimney.* Now for an impropriety or two in verbs. *Originate,* a deponent, is become active. People of fashion say, *He originated the measure.*

Johnson.[54] Scholars will always say, *The measure originated from him.*

Tooke. There is another word which we use improperly. We say, "Such a person was *executed* for robbery:" now the *person* is *prosecuted,* the *sentence executed.* One would imagine that *executioner* should designate the *judge,* him who executes the laws; not him who executes only one decision of them: but in our jurisprudence we have the hangman so perpetually before us that the expression is accountable and reasonable. *Execution* then stands with us for *juridical death,* and not for the completion of any other sentence. We employ it again on the seizure of goods under a warrant.

Johnson. Within the last year or two, I have heard the expression, "a man of *talent,*" instead of a man of *talents:*" and I am informed by my friend, Sir Joshua Reynolds, who quickly discerns an inelegance and strongly disapproves an innovation, that an *artist* now signifies a *painter,* and *art, painting* exclusively.*

Tooke. Ignorant people, I myself have remarked, are beginning to speak so: the fashion cannot continue. We might as well call a Doctor of Physic a doctor of rhubarb, and a Doctor of Laws a doctor of subpœnas. And yet we smile at the expressions of the vulgar. You would think me vulgar, if I called a man a *desperate* fool, or a house a *desperate* big house.

Johnson. Ay, indeed I should.

[54 *Johnson,* and two lines below, *Tooke,* added in 3rd ed.]

* Since the time of Johnson, the establishment of an academy for painting in England has much infected our language. If we find five metaphors in a chapter, four of them are upon trust from the oil-and-color man

Tooke. Come[55] along my learned and affable preceptor. Be it as pleasant for you to be released from the columns of a dictionary as for me to escape from the chapters of a grammar. We will expatiate freely over the wide and varied field before us, here trampling down a troublesome thistle, and there raising up again a neglected flower. We will make hay while the sun shines; and I perceive already that the clouds are rolling off. We will toss it about, lightly and easily; which is the true meaning of the word *discuss;* we will let in plentifully light and air, and inhale a fresh fragrance at every heaving of the rake. Others may cart it, lay it on the stack, press it, trim it, truss it, and carry it to market. Even if I should assist you but little, think it somewhat to have drawn around you so many steadfast and inquiring eyes, so many fair heads, each radiant with its circle of glory, like angels about some beautiful saint.

Johnson. Don't play the fool.

Tooke. Alas! it is the only game I have ever learned to play: but I dislike to play it single-handed. Come along, Doctor! We have many words implying intensity, now gone or going out of use among the middling classes, and lapsed entirely from the highest. Such as *mighty* (for *very*), which exactly corresponds with the Latin *valde:* and *desperate*, in the same sense, for which they had a relative in *insanus*, used by Cicero before the senate in designating the terraces of Clodius, which he calls "*insanas* substructiones." The vulgar now use *mortally* as Cicero uses *immortally*, an expression of intensity and vehemence. "Te a Cæsare quotidie plus diligi *immortaliter* gaudio."

Johnson. There is hardly any writer who does not sacrifice elegance to force, when he has occasion. Addison says that Virgil "*strained hard* to outdo Lucretius in the description of the plague."

Tooke. Addison, in the same sentence, which I remember for its singular weakness, says also, that, "If the reader would see with what success, he may find it at large in Scaliger."

Johnson. He might.

Tooke. Could he not find it equally at large in Lucretius and Virgil; or is Scaliger nearer at hand, presenting a more authentic document than the original? Addison is not only

[55 From "Come" to "single-handed" (19 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

an inconsiderate and superficial critic, but is often vulgar and mean: he is sometimes ungrammatical. He is both in that verse by which he has expressed how much more useful the senate was in Thessaly than at Rome.

Johnson. I remember none such.

Tooke.

> "The *corps* of half her senate
> *Manure* the fields of Thessaly."

The grammatical fault would not have been committed, if the word *corps* had been written, as it should be, with a final *e*. In his *Poem to the king* he hath several times used the word *corps* in the plural. On the contrary he has added *s* to the word *seraphim*. The bathos was never so well illustrated by Swift, as it might have been if he had taken his examples of it from Addison alone. What think you of this?—

> "Thus Ætna, when in fierce eruption *broke*,
> Fills heaven with ashes . . and the earth with smoke."

Look now at his *Saint Cecilia*. The imbecility of the first line we will pass over: in the second, where is the difference between the voice and the accents?—

> "Cecilia's name does all our numbers grace,
> From every voice the tuneful accents fly."

What does the word *it* relate to, in the next?—certainly not to *the accents*, probably not to *voice*, for the *every* stands in the way:—

> "In soaring trebles now *it* rises high,
> And now it sinks and dwells upon the base."

Doctor, I am a dealer in words, a *word-fancier*; excuse me then if I premise to you, in the spirit of trades and callings, the importance I attach to mine.

Johnson. Let us hear what you have to say. Wisdom is founded on words; on the right application of them.

Tooke. We have two which we use indifferently; *on* and *upon*. It appears to me that those who study elegance, by which I always mean precision and correctness, may give a

specimen here. I would say, *upon a tower:* on the same principle I would say, *on a marsh.* There would indeed be no harm in saying, *on a tower;* but there would be an impropriety in saying, *upon a marsh;* for *up*, whether we are attentive or inattentive, whether we have been a thousand times wrong or never, means *somwhat high*, somewhat to which we ascend. I should speak correctly if I said, "Doctor Johnson *flew on* me;" incorrectly if I said, "He *fell upon* me." Custom is a rule for every thing but contradiction. We have hardly three writers of authority.

Johnson. How, sir! hardly three! People of your cast in politics are fond of vilifying our country. Is this your Whigship?

Tooke. Whigship it is, indeed: but not mine. Consider me as holding out a cake of meal and honey to appease you, when I bring to your recollection that the Romans have but one. For, however great is the genius of Sallustius and Livius and Tacitus, faults have been detected in their style by those who could judge better of it than we can. Almost every elegant verse, almost every harmonious sentence in poetry and prose among the Romans, was written within half a century. The comic authors were imitators of the Greeks; nothing national is to be found in Plautus himself, in whose pieces every sentence bears the impression of its Attic mint. The great work of Lucretius and the greater of Ovid were the first and last deserving the name of poems, great[56] as was the vigor and high the spirit of Ennius. Judging by the language, one would imagine that several centuries had intervened between them; yet the same reader might have been living the day when each was edited. The most beautiful flowers grow in clusters. Lucretius, Catullus, and Calvus, the loss of whose works is the greatest that Latinity has sustained; then Virgil, Ovid, Horace, and Cassius of Parma, the next great loss; for desirous as every man must be to recover the rest of Cicero and Livius, yet he perceives that there is enough of them before him to judge of their genius quite correctly; the remainder would afford him only the same pleasure as what he enjoys. In the lost poets the sources of it are cut off altogether: they can afford us no delight, and we can render them no justice.

[56 From "great" to "Ennius" added in 3rd ed.]

Johnson. Addison has exhausted your stock.

Tooke. I had forgotten him again. Since however you bring him back to me, I will endeavor to prove that he has exhausted neither my justice nor my patience. His spelling is villainous: *coffy-house, bin* (for been), *evry, instanc'd, inclin'd.* He is fond of the word *hint,* which, as a substantive, no poet has used, or ever will use.

"Music can noble hints impart."

What is merely a hint, can hardly be noble.

"The Almighty listens to a tuneful tongue,
And seems well pleased and courted with a song."

If these lines had been translated from Voltaire, you would have cried out against his impiety. I know not your opinion of Chaucer.

Johnson. I do not read what I should read with difficulty.

Tooke. Addison says of him,—

"In vain he jests in his unpolished strain,
And tries to make his readers laugh in vain"

The verses are a tautology, and the remark an untruth. In his observations on Cowley there is a bold conceit, which I think must have been supplied by a better poet:—

"He more had pleased us had he pleased us less."

This, if it is nonsense, is more like the nonsense of Dryden than of Addison, and is such as conveys an idea. Here comes *hint* again:—

"What muse *but* thine can equal *hints* inspire."

To make it English, we must read some other word than *but.*

"And plays in *more unbounded* verse," &c.

Unbounded has in itself the force of a superlative, and cannot

admit the comparative *more*. On Milton he expresses your sentiments, but not as you would have expressed them :—

> "Oh had the poet ne'er profaned his pen
> To varnish o'er the guilt of faithless men,
> His other works *might* have deserved applause,
> But now the language can't support the cause."

Johnson. I confess that here he has reversed the matter, and that his own cause cannot support his language.

Tooke. What has *the cause* to do with the *other* works?[57] He might forsooth have succeeded in scenes of grandeur, if he *never* had written in defence of the Commonwealth. It is indeed time that Addison should "*bridle in his struggling muse.*"

Johnson. Sir, let us call the hostler and put her into the stable for the night. She has a good many blemishes, and winces more than one would have suspected from her sleek and fleshy appearance.

Tooke. She gives some indication too of having been among the vetches.

Johnson. To be grave on it, metaphor is inapplicable to personification.

Tooke.[58] Hurd is among the most conceited writers of the present day. He has imitated in prose the metaphor so justly ridiculed in these verses of Addison. In his *Dialogue on Sincerity*, he represents Waller saying, "After a few wanton circles, as it were to *breathe* and exercise my *muse*, *I drew her in* from these amusements to a stricter *manage*."

Johnson. His criticisms on others are usually sound and sensible. In his manners he is courtly; but in his language he mistakes vulgarity for ease, and inaccuracy for freedom. I remember an instance of his employing that word *manage* ambiguously. Instead of leaving it French he must give it an English spelling. With an English spelling it ought to have an English meaning, which it has not, but quite the contrary. His words are, "To the Hollanders indeed she could *talk big*; and it was

[57] Second ed. reads: "works? If Milton was a republican, is that a reason why, while his bad angels are in hell, his good ones should be in purgatory? He might," &c.]

[58] From "*Tooke*" to "defiance" (47 lines) added in 3rd ed]

not her humor to *manage* those over whom she had gained an ascendant." Now surely this expresses the very reverse of what the learned prelate wished to say. "*Look big*" recurs just below; and soon after, "much *indevoted* to the court," and "misconceived *of*," and "a *great means* of the hierarchical *greatness*." *Means* is plural. "To both your *satisfactions*," for to "the satisfaction of you both." Since you have mentioned Dryden, let me remark to you that his spelling is negligent. He writes *look'd, traduc'd, describ'd, supply'd, assur'd, polish'd, civiliz'd.* In his preface to the translation of the *Pastorals*, we find "Is there any thing more *sparkish* and better humor'd than Venus *her* addressing her son," &c. And he spells *icicles* "ycicles."

"Are these the limbs for *y*cicles to tear."

Tooke. He is rather to be followed in his *cou'd* and *wou'd* and *shou'd*; because so it is, and so it was then, pronounced. Addison too has written the same words in the same manner. I wish he had sanctioned by his authority more of our usages, and older and better. But our vicious spelling, and every thing else that is vicious in language, is likely to deepen; for every fresh shoal of novelists raises up some muddiness and wriggles against some weed. Of all the absurdities that ever were compressed into one word, surely the greatest is in the word *chiselled* when applied to features. If they who employ it mean to signify a fineness and delicacy, let them be taught that the chisel does only the rougher work, and that the polish is given by attrition. There is no such a thing in existence as a man or a woman; they are turned into *persons* and *individuals*. Nothing is given or granted; every thing is *accorded*. Weapons are out of use; but a pistol or a sword is become an *arm*.

Johnson. Very true. And soldiers are not encamped; they are *biv—biv*—do pronounce the word; you have flexible organs, and can pronounce the hardest in *Gulliver's Travels*. As for spelling it, I set the two Universities at defiance.

Tooke. I hear, Doctor, what anyone may easily suppose, that your acquaintance is greatly sought among the ladies. Now, for their benefit, and for the gentlemen too who write novels and romances, I would request you to exert you authority in repressing the term, *our hero*. These worthy people seem utterly unaware

that the expression turns their narrative into ridicule. Even on light and ludicrous subjects, it destroys that illusion which the mind creates to itself in fiction; and I have often wished it away when I have found it in Fielding's *Tom Jones*, although used jocularly. While we are interested in a story, we wish to see nothing of the author or of ourselves.

Johnson. I detest, let me tell you, your difficulties and exceptions, your frivolity and fastidiousness; I [59] have employed the word myself. You admit one great writer in one language! three or four in another!—pray, how many do you allow to Greece?

Tooke. I would not interrupt you, Doctor, thinking it of all things the most indecorous. England has many great writers, Rome has many; but languages do not retain their purity in the hands even of these. Whenever I think of Greece, I think with astonishment and awe; for the language and the nation seem indestructible. Long before Homer, and from Homer to Epictetus, there must have been an uninterrupted series of admirable authors, although we have lost the earliest of them, both before the poet and after. For no language can hold its breath one whole century: it becomes, if not extinct, very defective and corrupted, if no great writer fosters it and gives it exercise in that period. What a variety of beauty, what a prodigality and exuberance of it in the Greek! Even in its last age it exists in all its freshness. The letter which the mother of Saint Chrysostom addressed to that enthusiast in his youth is far more eloquent, far more powerful in thought and sentiment, than any thing in Xenophon or Plato. That it is genuine cannot be doubted; for it abounds in tenderness which saints never do, and is concise, which Chrysostom is not.

Johnson. Greece ought to be preserved and guarded by the rulers of the world as a cabinet of gems, open and belonging to them all. Whatever is the fate of other countries, whatever changes may be introduced, whatever laws imposed, whatever tributes exacted, she should preserve her lineaments uneffaced. Her ancient institutions and magistracies should be sanctioned to her, in gratitude for the inestimable blessings she has conferred on us. There is no more danger that republicanism would be con-

[59 From "I" to "myself" added in 3rd ed.]

tagious from it, than from a medal of Cimon or Epaminondas. To Greece is owing the conversation we hold together; to Greece is owing the very city in which we hold it,—its wealth, its power, its equity, its liberality. These are among her earlier benefits: her later are not less. We owe to her the better part of that liturgy by which the divine wrath (let us hope) may be averted from the offences of our prosperity.

Tooke. I would rather see this regeneration, than Viscount Corinth or Marquis Lacedæmon, than conduct to her carriage the Duchess Œnoanda, or even than dance with Lady Ogygia or Lady Peribœa. We may expect the worthy baronet, Sir Acamas Erechthyoniades, High Sheriff of Mycenæ, if more fashionable systems should prevail, to be created Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of that county.

Johnson. How much better and how much easier is it to remove the dirt and rubbish from around this noble statue, and to fix on it again the arm that is broken off and lies under it, than to carve it anew into some Gothic form, and to set it up in the weedy garden of an ignorant and drunken neighbor.

Tooke. The liberation of Greece is the heirloom of our dreams, and comes not under the cognizance even of imagination when awake. To suppose that she could resist the power of Turkey one year, would be to suppose her more valiant and heroic than she ever was. If this were possible, the most despotic governments, the most friendly to her enslaver, the most indifferent to glory, the most deaf to honor, the very dead to Christianity, would lend an arm to support and save her. Nothing could be more politic, for England in particular, than to make her what Rhodes was formerly, what Malta should now be,—equipped if not for the faith, equipped and always under sail against piracy; and religion would not induce her, as it would the knights of those islands, to favor the Catholics in case of war.

Johnson. Here our political views converge. Publish your thoughts; proclaim them openly: such as these you may.

Tooke. It would cost me three thousand pounds to give them the requisite weight; and I believe there are some other impediments to my entrance into the House of Commons. Nothing is fitted to the hands of a king's minister but what is placed in them by a member of that honorable house. They take my money,

which serves them little, while my advice, which might do some good, they would reject disdainfully. As where there is omniscience there is omnipotence, so wisdom (we seem to think) is always in proportion to power. A great man feels no want of it; and faulty arguments are only to be discovered through a hole in the dress.[60]

Johnson. If your observation were always as just and your arguments as innocent, I never should decline your conversation; but on the contrary, I should solicit from you a catalogue of such peculiarities and defects as a profound insight into our language, and a steady investigation of its irregularities and intricacies, have enabled you to remark.

Tooke. And now, Doctor Johnson, you are at last in good-humor; I hope to requite your condescension by an observation more useful than any I have yet submitted to you. Annibal Caracci, I know not whether in advice or in reproof, said to a scholar, *What you do not understand you must darken.* Are not we also of the Bologna school, my dear Doctor? Do not we treat men and things in general as Caracci would have the canvas treated? What we cannot so well manage or comprehend, we throw into a corner or into outer darkness. I do not hate, believe me, nor dislike you for your politics: whatever else they prove, they prove your constancy and disinterestedness. Nor do I supplicate you for a single one more of those kind glances which

[60 In the 1824 edition there is only one Conversation between Tooke and Johnson. Considerable additions were made to this in the edition of 1826, and in that of 1846 the lengthened Conversation was broken into two. The second Conversation only contains a small amount of matter from the 1824 edition; the greater part of it consists of the 1826 additions and subsequent expansion. From this point the 1824 version only occurs in detached sentences, whose origin will be pointed out. The relation between the text here printed and that of 1826 may be stated as follows. The 1826 text reads here: "a hole in the coat or breeches. We are two somnambulists, who have awakened each other by meeting. We will return to our old quarters and pick up words again, now our eyes are open.

'I would not hear a word
Should lessen me in your esteem,'" &c.,

as on page 409. From that point the basis of the printed text is the edition of 1826. The remaining part of the first Conversation in the printed text is with slight variations the conclusion of the single Conversation in the text of 1826.]

you just now vouchsafed me. The fixedness of your countenance, frowning as it is, shows at least that you attend to me, which, from a man of your estimation in the world, is no slight favor. Contented as I ought to be with it, I would yet entreat for others in the same condition, that you may be pleased to consider those writers whose sentiments are unpopular, as men walking away spontaneously from the inviting paths of Fortune, and casting up the sum of an account which is never to be paid or presented.

Johnson. I did not think there was so much wisdom in you.

Tooke. Nor was there until this conversation and this strong hand created it.

Johnson. How! have I then shaken hands with him? and so heartily?

SECOND CONVERSATION.[1]

Tooke. I am lying in my form, a poor timid hare, and turning my eyes back on the field I have gone through: has not Doctor Johnson a long lash to start me with?

Johnson. Take your own course.

Tooke. Expect then a circuitous and dodging one. Our hospitable friend, by inviting me so soon again to meet you, proves to me his high opinion of your toleration and endurance.

Johnson. Sir, we can endure those who bring us information and are unwilling to obtrude it.

Tooke. I can promise the latter only. We[1] are two somnambulists who have awakened each other by meeting. Let us return to our old quarters, and pick up words, as before, now our eyes are open.

Johnson. Is your coat-sleeve well furnished with little slips and scraps, as it was when we met last?

Tooke. I am much afraid that I may have forgotten what I then brought forward; and if by chance I should occasionally make the same remark over again on the same word, I must bespeak your indulgence and pardon.

[1 See note 60 on the last Conversation.]

Johnson. I wish, sir, you had not bowed to me in that manner when you spoke your last words: such an act of courtesy brings all the young ladies about us. They cannot be much interested by our conversation.

Tooke. That must entirely depend on you. But as our language, like the Greek, the Latin, and the French, may be purified and perfected by the ladies, I hope you will interest them in the discussion, to which this evening I bring only slight materials.

You frown on them, Doctor! but you would not drive them away; and they know it. They fear your frown no more than the sparrows and linnets, in old times, feared the scythe and other implements of the garden god.

"Hanged, drawn, and quartered." Such is the sequence of words employed in the sentence on traitors.

Johnson. And, sir, are you here to remark it?

Tooke. It seems so; and not without the need.

Johnson. Traitors must first have been *drawn* to the place of punishment.

Tooke. True; and hence a vulgar error in the learned. A sportsman will tell you that a hare is *drawn* when its entrails are taken out. The traitor was *drawn* surely enough, to the block or gallows; but the law always states its sentences clearly, although its provisions and enactments not so. The things to be suffered come in due order. Here the criminal is first hanged, then *drawn*, then his body is cut into quarters.

Johnson. I believe you may be right. You have not answered me whether you come supplied with your instruments of torture, —your grammatical questions.

Tooke. I have many of these in my memory, and some on the back of a letter. Permit me first to ask whether we can say, *I had hear?*

Johnson. You mean to say *heard.*

Tooke. No; I mean the words, *I had hear.*

Johnson. Why ask me so idle a question?

Tooke. Because I find in the eighth chapter of *Rasselas*, "I *had* rather *hear* thee dispute." The intervention of *rather* cannot make it more or less proper.

Johnson. Sir, you are right. I hope you do not very often

find such inaccuracies in my writings. Can you point out another?

Tooke. I should do it with less pleasure than ease; and I doubt whether there is one in fifty pages, which is indeed no moderate concession, no ordinary praise: for we English are less attentive to correctness and purity of style than any other nation, ancient or modern, that ever pretended to elegance or erudition.

Johnson. Sir, you have reason on your side.

Tooke. In having Dr Johnson with me.

Johnson. I have observed the truth of what you say, and I wonder I never have published my remark.

Tooke. Permit me, my dear sir, to partake of your wonder on this subject; you have excited mine on so many. But since you authorize me to adduce an instance of your incorrectness, for which I ought to be celebrated among the great discoverers—

Johnson. No flattery, sir! no distortion of body! Stand upright and speak out.

Tooke. The second paragraph in *Rasselas* is this: "Rasselas was the fourth son of the mighty Emperor in whose dominions the father of waters begins his course; whose bounty," &c. Now *whose* must grammatically appertain to "the mighty Emperor." But we soon discover by the context that it belongs to "the father of waters."

Johnson. I am afraid you are correct.

Tooke. My dear sir, let us never be afraid of any man's possessing this advantage, but always of his having fraud and falsehood. Reason will come over to our side if we pay her due respect when we find her on the side of an adversary. But I am not yours: let her sit between us, and let us enjoy her smiles and court her approbation.

Johnson (*aside*). Strange man! it is difficult to think him half so wicked as he is. But I am inclined to believe that we may be marvellously infatuated by a mountebank's civility.

Tooke. Doctor, if your soliloquy is terminated as your turning round to me again seems to indicate, may I ask whether the Nile is legitimately the father of waters? The Ocean seems to possess a prior right: and the Eridanus has enjoyed the prescriptive title, *King of Rivers*, from collecting a greater number of streams than

any known among the ancients. But the Nile, as far as the ancients knew, collected none.

Johnson. Insufferably captious!

Tooke. The captious are never insufferable where nothing is to be caught. Let us set others right as often as we can, without hurting them or ourselves. If this is to be done in either, the setting right is an expensive process.

Johnson. Begin, sir.

Tooke. We will begin our amicable engagement in the same manner as hostilities in the field are usually begun. A few straggling troops fire away first, from hedges and bushes. As far indeed as I am concerned, there will be no order throughout the whole, from first to last. Whatever the part of speech may be, it pretends to the advantages of no lineal descent, and claims no right of appointing a successor. As we appeal to the Roman laws in grammar rather than to the custom of the land, pray, why are not "resist*a*nce" and "attend*a*nce" spelled with *e* like "resid*e*nce" and "permanence," all proceeding from participles of the same form, "resist*e*ns," "attend*e*ns," "resid*e*ns," "permanens"? We write "correspond*e*nt," "stud*e*nt," "penit*e*nt," "resid*e*nt," yet we always find "assist*a*nt."

Johnson. This, like most irregularities, arises from inattention and slovenliness, not from ignorance or perverseness. Is it not also strange that *won* should be the preterite of *win*, when "beg*u*n" is the preterite of "begin"?

Tooke. Strange, indeed. Ben Jonson uses *wun* in his comedy of *Every Man in his Humor*. So if we write *said* and *paid*, why not *staid* and *praid?* If we write *laid*, why not *allaid* and *delaid?* Now, for a substantive or two. South properly writes "begg*e*r." Waller, in the same age, "veget*a*ls," which I think is preferable to "veget*ables*." There is a reason why the word "eatables" is better spelled as at present. We want "contra*dictive*" for the person, as well as "contra*dicting*" for the thing. We had it and have lost it, while we see other old words brought into use again very indiscreetly. Among the rest the word *wend*. There is no need of it, unless in poetry. In certain new books we find *wended*. There is properly no such word: Spenser has coined it unlawfully. *Went* is the preterite of *wend*, as *lent* of *lend*, *spent* of *spend*, *bent* of *bend*.

These are among the few verbs which do not possess two forms of the preterite; the one ending in *ed*, the other in *t*: as *pass, passed, past; ceases, ceased, ceast.* There can be no such word as "pass'*d*" "ceas'*d*," though we find them printed. We write, "I talk*ed*, I walk*ed*, I march*ed*," but such words never existed, for these words never were pronounced, and the others never could be. Writing is but the sign of speech; and *such* writing is a false signal. No word ought to be so written that it cannot be pronounced; but when we have the same word before us written plainly, it is a strange perversion to reject the commodious spelling. It is as improper to write *alledge* or *abridge* (abrege) as *colledge* or *knowledge. Kerchief* also is wrongly spelled; it has nothing to do with "chief." Milton writes in the *Penseroso*,—

"Kercheft in a comely cloud."

We, in imitation of the French, say, "ten *times* as *high*;" the Italian "ten *turns*" (dieci *volte*): the Romans and Greeks expressed it by the simple adverb. *Highth* has nothing to do with time: here is an ellipsis, "ten times *told*." I now proceed to a favorite word of yours, which is wrongly spelled: *allegiance.* In its present form it appears to come from *allege*, or (as we write it) *alledge*; whereas it comes from *liege*, and should be spelled "alliegeance."

Johnson. You have asked me many questions; let me ask you one. What think you of calling a female writer an *author*, in which the terminating syllable expresses the noun masculine?

Tooke. Since we in English have no nouns masculine by declension, I see no reason why we should not extend the privileges of those we adopt: a queen may be called a governor, and a god-mother a sponsor. I wish we had authority for terminating the words in *ess* as we have for writing others which usually end in *or*. As our English terminations in few words designate the genders, I should not hesitate.

Johnson. Do you hesitate at any thing?

Tooke. At differing in opinion from a superior.

Johnson. Superior! do you admit superiors?

Tooke. I do not admit that a ducal coronet may constitute one, nor that men can make great him whom God has made little: the attempt is foolish and impious. But whoever has

improved by industry the talents his Maker has bestowed on him, to a greater amount than I have done, is my superior. If brighter wit, if acuter judgment, if more creative genius, are allotted him, I reverence in his person a greater than I am, and believe that Almighty God has granted me the sight of him and conversation with him, that I may feel at once my own wants and my own powers: that I may be at once humble and grateful.

Johnson. You? you?

Tooke (*bows*). Accept the sign of both, however inadequate the expression.

Johnson. This is really stooping to conquer. I was wrong and rude. I will not offend so again.

Tooke. I am encouraged to pursue my inquiries. What do you think of *horse-godmother* and *horse-laugh?*

Johnson. Expressions of coarseness. The Greeks, instead of *horse*, employed *ox*. *Boumastos*, the *bumastus* of Virgil's *Georgics*, is a large species of grape: *boupais* is our *booby*.

Tooke. Very true, Doctor; but may I whisper in your ear my suspicion that the *horse* has nothing to do with the *god-mother* or the *laugh?* Indeed, I believe no animal has less the appearance of laughter, or is less liable to those outward and visible signs of sickness which sometimes are attributed to him in the comparison, "Sick as a horse." The *godmother* of the personage I whispered to you may readily be imagined a very coarse and indelicate one; her *laughter* suitable to her character; and her *house* by no means salubrious: and *horse* is designated by the possessive *s*, as in Saint Clement's, Saint Paul's.

Johnson. I have been looking into a few old authors for their modes of spelling; and remembering the better one of writing *stil*, and the many instances where, by being spelled with a double *l*, it might easily be taken for the adjective, I took the trouble to write them down. There was indeed an age in our literature when such confusion was thought a beauty. Sir Philip Sidney, in the best of his poems, says,—

> "Now be *still*; yet *still* believe me," &c.

In another poem of a later author I find,—

> "Lie *still*, sweet maid, and wait the Almighty will;
> Then rise unchanged and be an angel *still*."

How much better would these verses be if the first words were,—

"*Rest here*, sweet maid."

Tooke. Unquestionably. But perhaps the learned author had Sir P. Sidney in his eye, and was not undelighted with the pleasurable vices of poetry in such company.

Johnson. We need not poke into holes nor pry into corners for old expressions or old modes of spelling. They lie open, on a wide field, in full sunshine. Cowley always writes the preterites and participles *extinguisht, possest, disperst, refresht, nourisht, stopt, knockt, dreamt, burnt, usurpt, reacht.* Daniel and Drayton, among the poets; Waller, Cleaveland, and Cowley, in prose,—are the first who wrote as easily as we write at present. The only poetry I can bring to memory, which is perfectly such in regard to language as might be written at the present day, is Daniel's,—

"I must not grieve my love, whose eyes should read
Lines of delight," &c.

Tooke. Permit me to return with you to the verbs. To *lead* is *led* in the preterite; so should *read* be *red.* We have wisely curtailed the final *e*, and may just as wisely curtail the unnecessary reduplication of *d:* for nobody can mistake in any sentence the verb for the adjective. In such words as *amerced, coerced*, &c., the abbreviators of the last and present age usually omit the *e;* but the earlier wrote *amerst, coerst*, to designate that one syllable was added unnecessarily. I have seen letters from the historian Hume, in which he constantly writes *talkt, remarkt, lavisht, askt.* In his printed works, the compositor and publisher would never permit it.

Johnson. What improvement, in style or any thing else, can be expected from a free thinker?

Tooke. Among a thousand deteriorations I remember but one improvement in writing since my childhood.

Johnson. What is that?

Tooke. Of late I have remarked that the generality of authors no longer write every substantive with a capital letter.

Johnson. It makes an unseemly appearance in the type.

Tooke. The unseemliness is not equal to the absurdity; nor does it matter whether this letter or that letter be pretty in its form, or whether it vault with its head above the surface, or dive with its feet under.

Johnson. I see indeed no reason why we should employ the capital letter in the middle of the sentence, unless in proper names, in the names of people and countries, in the months, the days, and in the appellations and attributes of the Deity.

Tooke. The French, if I may venture an opinion, are more elegant than we are in their usage, when they curtail the number of capitals.

Johnson. The wretches do not write even *Dieu* with one!

Tooke. No doubt they are very wretched in this oversight: but perhaps they believe that God is hardly to be made greater by a great letter.

Johnson. This is scoffing: I scorn to answer it. And pray, sir, in your reviling, what would you do with *Angels* and *Sirens?*

Tooke. As they happen to be present, pray ask of themselves what I should do with them, and assure them I am all compliance.

Lady to another. The impudent creature! Did you ever hear the like?

Lady in answer. How should I?—I am married.

Johnson. If you terminate your preterites and participles in *est* instead of *essed*, which you may do, as there is no innovation in it, you must, to be consistent, spell several of those ending in *ed* without the *e*, as *improv'd.*

Tooke. Certainly some others; not those: for the vowel gives here the grave sound which the syllable requires. Negligent and thoughtless writers have done it; so they have even in *amerced, coerced.* But if they take away a letter where it is wanted, they put one where it is not; and we continue in this extravagance when we write "worshippers" and counsellors," for which we have less plea than our predecessors, who wrote "worshippe" and counsell."

Johnson. Although I agree with you on many points, after reflecting upon the matter I cannot give my assent to the Anglicising of Greek plurals, such as *phenomena, scholia, encomia.* How would you manage some Latin one?—such for instance as *genii.*

Tooke. We retain the plural *genii* when we refer to the imaginary beings of Oriental fable; that there may be a distinction between these and such real and solid ones as Doctor Johnson, which, according to our idiom and custom, we call *geniuses*. If you insist on retaining the terminations of Greek nouns, then, Doctor, the pleasing task must devolve on you of teaching ladies the Greek grammar. But if they do not accept the plurals of other languages, why should they of this? They say *signors*, and not *signori*.

Now we find ourselves dropped suddenly on designations in society, is it not wonderful that we should apply to the clergy two names so extremely different in their import as the *divine* and the *cloth?* Among the well-dressed gentlemen we may have happened to meet in society, I doubt whether a single one would be contented to be called a piece of haberdashery: and as for a *divine*, the young lady yonder,—I mean the tall and slender one, with soft, dark, pensive eyes, and eyebrows not too arched nor too definite,—is incomparably more one to my fancy than his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Johnson. I do not see nor heed the girl.

Tooke. If you could do the one without the other, you would have more philosophy than our discourse requires.

Johnson. My worthy sir! I do request you will be somewhat more circumspect in your observations.

Tooke. Many thanks, Doctor! some of them for the advice, and others for two suggestions. *Worth* and *worthy* are subjected to the same construction. I would say, for distinction-sake, "*worth* any price," and "*worthy* of my esteem." The *of*, which is now omitted after *worthy*, would be only as wrongly added after *worth*. The other day I received a letter from a person who really can read and write rather better than you would suppose, and I found in it mar*quess* instead of mar*quis*.

Johnson. Sir, the word *marquess* will be a very proper term for *marquis* whenever, by some miraculous power, he becomes his own wife. I wonder that no writer of common sense has remarked that mar*quess* for the lady is better than mar*chioness*. My reason is plain enough: it is more proper to assimilate it to its native French than to barbarous Latin: neither the French nor the Italian authorise the form of *marchioness*.

Tooke. Would not *circumspective* be a better form than *circumspect?* as corresponding with *prospective* and *retrospective?*

Johnson. It would. I cannot but think that so irregular a locution was at first occasioned by abbreviation in manuscripts: *circumspect* would otherwise be a substantive, like *prospect* and *retrospect.* Now why do you not draw up into a regular and orderly composition these remarks?

Tooke. Even if the thing were worth it, I would never take the trouble, well knowing how impatient an English public is of any changes for the better. And yet, by some unaccountable chance, we have latterly made one improvement in our language among infinite deteriorations.

Johnson. What is it?

Tooke. The restoration of *that* or *which*, in cases of need. The omission is peculiarly observable among the dramatists; the later follow the older, and limp awkwardly in the rear. Addison and Rowe for instance,—

> "I would not hear a word
> Should lessen thee in my esteem."[2]

And,—

> "Curse on the innovating hand attempts it."

Custom can never make English of this, because it never can make sense of it. In fact, the relative should only be omitted where a pronoun is concerned. On the other hand, the insertion of it, where it can be well avoided, is among the principal blemishes of ordinary writers. In[3] most places I would eradicate this stiff, hard, thriftless plantain which overruns our literature.

Johnson. At some time, I doubt not, these observations will be carefully collected and duly estimated.

Tooke. The Sibylline leaves, which contain the changes of an empire, as these do of a language, were disconnected and loose. The great difference is that, although mine may be refused at their

[[2] See note 60 on the last Conversation. Second ed. reads: "esteem. This fault of omitting the relative *that* or *which* is not unusual with dramatic writers: in the more ancient it is common; but we find it even in the elegant Rowe. 'Curse,'" &c. From "Custom" to "it" (2 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[[3] From "In" to "frequenter" (57 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

value, a light breath will not scatter and confuse them, blow it whence it may.

Johnson. Your former conversation has made me think repeatedly what a number of beautiful words there are of which we never think of estimating the value, as there are of blessings. How carelessly, for example, do we (not we, but people) say, "I am delighted to *hear from you.*" No other language has this beautiful expression, which, like some of the most lovely flowers, loses its charms for want of close inspection. When I consider the deep sense of these very simple and very common words, I seem to hear a voice coming from afar through the air, breathed forth, and entrusted to the care of the elements, for the nurture of my sympathy.

Tooke. Since we are become a learned nation, not only the words we have cast aside, but also those we have substituted in the place of them, are mostly injudicious: and such others as we have taken the trouble to construct are unskilful botches. What think you of the word *scientific*, which doubtless some *scientific* man brought into the world?

Johnson. What should I think about it?

Tooke. That it is *unscientific*. Now *fic* comes from *fingere*, and means *making*. *Prolific* is *making* a progeny: *scientific* is not *making* a science, but adding to the improvement or advancement of one already made.

There are other forms so long and so well established in the mind, that we would hardly alter them if we could. For instance, *eve* and *evening* are the same: so are *morn* and *morning*. Christmas eve is the *evening* or (largely used) the *day* before Christmas. Yet we should be stared at if we said *Monday evening* or *eve*, meaning Tuesday. Nevertheless, if we were always bound by strict analogy, we should speak so. I would be guided by analogy no farther than where I am in danger of being led into ambiguities by neglecting it. A man would be stared at who should call *this morning*, *to-morrow*.

Among the phrases lately brought back again into use is the very idle and inefficient *ever and anon*. An apparition at once so grave and so shadowy makes an unseemly figure in the frippery and tinsel of a circulating library.

Johnson. I wonder that the expression was *ever* formed;

and that, having been formed, it was not *anon* exposed and left to perish.

Tooke. But the oddest expression in our language is *many a one.* The Italians have *tutti e tree:* for *all three,* "all *and* three" *tutte e quattro,* &c.

Johnson. We have also a strange expression in *never* for *no;* thus, "*ne'er a one of them.*"

Tooke. Ne'er in this instance has no reference to time, but properly to person: *ne'er* here is an awkward contraction of *no-where.* This is intelligible to all, however few at first sight may be able to account for it. Ambiguity is worse than stiffness: but stiffness is bad enough, and much more common. Nothing[4] of this kind in our authors is frequenter than the subjunctive: "if it *be,* unless it *be:*" which ought never to be used where the doubt is not very strong; for it should be a very strong doubt to supplant idiom. Our best writers use *who* and *whom,* only in speaking of intellectual beings. We do not properly say *the tree who, the horse who;* in fable, however, it would be right, for there they reason and speak.

Johnson. The French and other moderns, I believe, never omit those words of theirs whereby they express the relative *which* or *that.*

Tooke. So we are taught, and in regard to the French, truly. But in the best of the Italian writers *che* is omitted. Machiavelli, whom you will allow me to quote where politics sit idle, has omitted it twice in one sentence: "Monstrale l'amore le porti, dicale il bene le vuoi." *Mandrag.* 4. "I am happy to find from the letter you wrote me, that you enjoy good health." Here *that* is omitted rightly after letter, which it could not well be between the words *me* and *you.* The rejection of it in the proper place is a cause of peculiar elegance, for it bears heavily on our language. The Romans were fortunate to avoid it by means of the *infinitive* of their verbs; and perhaps more fortunate still in having so many words to express *but,* another sad stumbling-block to us. Our language is much deformed by the necessity of its recurrence; and I know not any author who has taken great pains to avoid it where he could.

Johnson. Nothing is right with you: in language as in

[4 2nd ed. reads: "another is the too frequent subjunctive," etc.]

government we yield to Greeks and Romans. One would imagine that Addison, a Whig, might please you.

Tooke. Doctor, I never ask or consider or care of what party is a good man or a good writer. I have always been an admirer of Addison, and the oftener I read him, I mean his prose, the more he pleases me. Perhaps it is not so much his style, which however is easy and graceful and harmonious, as the sweet temperature of thought in which we always find him, and the attractive countenance, if you will allow me the expression, with which he meets me upon every occasion. It is very remarkable, and therefore I stopped to notice it, that not only what little strength he had, but all his grace and ease, forsake him when he ventures into poetry: he is even coarse and abject, and copies the grammatical faults of his predecessors without copying any thing else of their manner, good or bad. Were I inclined to retaliate on you, I might come against you in the rear of others, and throw my stone at you on the side of Gray; and[5] where you would least expect it for indulgence. Prejudiced or unprejudiced against him, I wonder you did not catch at the beard of his bard streaming *like a meteor*. He did not take the idea from the *Moses* of Michel Angelo, nor from the *Padre Eterno* of Raphael in his vision of Ezekiel, but from the *Hudibras* of Butler.

> "This *hairy meteor* did denounce
> The fall of sceptres and of crowns."

Here we have the very words.

Until you pointed out to me my partiality for the Greeks and Romans, I never had suspected it, having always thought ten pages in Barrow worth all their philosophy put together, and finding more wisdom and thought in him, distinct from theology, than[6] in any of them, excepting Aristoteles. If his eloquence is somewhat less pure than that of Demosthenes and Thucydides, who have reached perfection, his mind is as much more capacious and elevated as the Sun is than the Moon and Mercury.

Johnson. It is better and pleasanter to talk generally on great and high subjects than minutely. Who would examine that could expatiate?

[5] From "and" to "indulgence" added in 3rd ed.]
[6] Second ed. reads: "than any other man. If," &c.

Tooke. None can expatiate safely who do not previously examine; and we are not always to consider in our disquisitions what is pleasantest, but sometimes what is usefullest. I wonder, in matters of reason, how any thing little or great can excite ill humor: for as many steps as they lead us toward reason, just so many, one would think, they should lead us away from passion. Why should these dry things have discomposed you? If I ride a broomstick, must I like a witch raise a storm? In reality a great deal of philosophy, a great deal not only of logic but of abstruse and recondite metaphysics, will be found in etymology: the part least pleasing to you in our conversation. I do not wonder that such men as Varro and Cæsar studied it and wrote upon it; but I doubt whether the one or the other went very deeply into the business. It is astonishing that the more learned among the Geeeks knew absolutely nothing of it. Admirably as they used the most beautiful of languages, they cared no more about its etymologies than a statuary cares about the chemical properties of his marble.

Doctor,[7] in your travels, did you ever happen to see gossamer?

Johnson. In my English travels, I saw it formerly in Needwood Forest, five miles from Lichfield: latterly my travels were in Scotland, where there was no plant to support it.

Tooke. I am unwilling to take so great a freedom as to contest a derivation with you personally, but permit me to suggest the possibility that many words in what is called low Latin, which resemble our English words, are not their parents. Certainly there is a certain resemblance of *gossipium* and *gossimer*. But *gorse*, which in many parts of the country is also called *furze* or *whin*, appears to me to be its root. Chaucer and Shakspeare spell it *gossamour;* Drayton of the same county and age, *gossamere*. Now, if we consider that the common people universally, and the greater part of others, treat the letter *r* very gently, and that you never heard a farmer call *gorse* otherwise than *goss;* if you then consider how large a number of our plants take their names from sentiments,—perhaps you may incline to think it possible that *gossamour* or *gorse's-love, gors-amour*. For love seems to be nowhere more faithful than between the plant and its daily

[7 From "Doctor" to "film" (43 lines) added in 3d ed.]

visitant in spring, summer, and autumn: on no other do you see it so frequently. The name was given in the first incubation of the French upon the Saxon.

Johnson. Sir, this is fanciful.

Tooke. I am invested with a new quality by the partiality of Doctor Johnson. You mention in your *Dictionary* the word *gossipium* as of low Latinity. I find it nowhere but in Pliny; and he was certainly a man of the highest rank and best education. He mentions it as bearing cotton, which is very different from the *gorse*. There are a few words (but *gossipium* is not one of them) which we believe to be of the latest Latinity, and which in reality are of the earliest. The readers of Apuleius are taught that several of his words are provincial, and of very base and very recent coinage; whereas they were carried into Africa with the first Roman settlers, and retained their vitality in that country when they had lost it at Rome: just as several of our noblest families are extinct in England, but branch off vigorously in Ireland. The Romans called a goose a gander; they forgot the female name: the Italians in country places never lost it; and to this day *auca* is called *occa*.

Johnson. I should like to know whether the man is in earnest; but that I never shall.

In return for this illusory and unsubstantial film, I will present to you a curiosity in the Latin: for surely it is curious that the Romans should have used two words of origin quite contrary for the same thing. To *promise* was not only *promittere* but *recipere*; the authority is Cicero.

Tooke. The reason is plain.

Johnson. As you are fond of reasons and innovations, I would consign to you willingly two or three words on which to exercise your ingenuity. I would allow you to write *monsterous* and *wonderous* with an *e*, on the same principle as we write *treacherous* and *ponderous*.

Tooke. Liberally offered, and gratefully accepted. Encroachment may sometimes be the follower of kindness: am I going too far in asking that *rough*, *tough*, *sough*, *enough*, may be guided by *bluff*, *rebuff*, *cuff*? Why should not *cough* be spelled *coff*; why not *dough* and *akhough*, *dow* and *altho*,—for the benefit of strangers and learners, to say nothing of economy in

letters; the only kind of economy on which we reformers can ever hope to be heard? As there is also a cry against the letter *s*, I would remove it from *onwards*, *towards*, *forwards*, *backwards*, *afterwards*, where it is improper, however sanctioned by the custom of good authors; and I would use it only where the following word begins with *d* or *t*, for the sake of euphony. On the same principle I approve of *saith*, &c., instead of *says*, &c., where the next word begins with *s*, or *z*, or *ce* and *ci*. Hobbes[8] is the last who writes with this termination, and neither he nor his predecessors abstained from it before another *th*. Persons very unlearned, such as Swift and others, have from their natural acuteness perceived the utility of *fixing*, as they call it, our language.

Johnson. Sir, I have been patient: I have heard you call Swift a very unlearned man. Malignity of Whiggism! I give him up to you, however: he was not very learned. But you ought to have spared and favored him; for he was irreverential to the great, and to his God.

Tooke.[9] An ill-tempered, sour, supercilious man may nevertheless be a sycophant; and he was one. He flattered some of the worst men that ever existed, and maligned some of the best. Of all inhumanities and cruelties, his toward two women who reposed their affections on so undeserving an object was in its nature the worst and the most unprovoked. But, Doctor, I am inclined to believe that God is as fond of his lively children as of his dull ones; and would as willingly see them give their pocket-money to the indigent and afflicted, as offer their supplications or even their thanks to him. I may be mistaken: so many wiser men have been, that in all these matters I deliver my opinion, but do not inculcate nor insist upon it. When I spoke of Swift and others as very unlearned, I meant in the etymologies and diversities of our language. Swift wrote admirably.

[8 From "Hobbes" to "th" (3 lines) added in 3rd ed. From "Persons" to "language" (4 lines) occurs in 1st ed. For an example of Johnson's language about Swift see "Boswell, ii., 319," (Clarendon Press ed.). "Johnson attacked Swift as he used to do upon all occasions." In the life of Swift Johnson calls him original.]

[9 From "*Tooke*" to "But" (6 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

Johnson. Yes, sir: and was more original than you and all your tribe.

Tooke. I am willing that a Tory should for ever be an original, and be incapable of having a copyist. But, when I was younger, I read Swift as often as perhaps any other may have done; not for the sake of his thoughts and opinions, but of his style, which I would carry with me and employ.

Johnson. Addison's is better.

Tooke. What I admire in Addison I cannot so easily make use of. If you or I attempted to imitate the mein and features of a Cupid or a Zephyr, I doubt whether we should quite succeed. Perhaps [10] when we meet again, if that pleasure is reserved for me, I may carry in the spacious sleeves of this coat seventy or eighty expressions culled from Addison, at which you will shake your head. At present let me treat you with one sentence, the only one of them I can perfectly recollect. "When we had done eating *ourselves*, the knight called a waiter to him, and *bid* him carry the remainder to the waterman, &c." Now, when they had done *eating themselves*, the waterman would hardly thank them for the remainder, and probably their voices would be but little intelligible to the waiter. Swift is not so original as you think him. He was a peruser of rare books; for, zealous as he appears in favor of the classics, he liked nothing that was not strange. In one of his searches probably after such reading, he tells us he first met Harley. I do not mention Cyrano de Bergerac, and some others who have given him ideas on the ground-plan of his works; but I mean to bring you where you may find the thoughts. The most beautiful of them is owing to Plutarch. That simile of the geographers and sands of Africa is taken from the first sentence in the *Life of Thesus*. I have traced a great number of his other fancies and reflections, in writers less known and less esteemed.

Johnson. Plutarch has many good ones.

Tooke. Yes, Doctor; and although his style is not valued by the critics, I could inform them that there are in Plutarch many passages of exquisite beauty in regard to style, derived perhaps from authors more ancient.

Johnson. Inform them of nothing, sir, if you wish to live

[10 From "Perhaps" to "waiter" (10 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

peaceably. Let them take from you, but do not offer it. They will pass over your freshest thoughts as if they had been long and intimately known to them, and display your abstruser (to them incomprehensible) as the only ones worthy of remark.

Tooke. Among these hogs of Westphalia there is not one with a snout that can penetrate into my enclosure, prompt as they are to batten on it and bespatter it, and to trample it down as they grunt and trot along. Doctor, you have been keeping admirable time to my words with your head and body.

Johnson. Is that sentence yours? I like the period.

Tooke. Let any one claim it whom it suits as well: I grant and resign it freely. Periods I willingly throw away; but not upon things like these. A[11] wise man is shown clearly, distinctly, and advantageously, when he is seen walking patiently by the side of an unwise one; but only on some occasions and to some extent. To quarrel on the road, to twitch him by the coat at every slip he makes, and to grow irritated in irritating him, proves to the unwise man that there is one in the world unwiser than he.

Johnson. And now, sir, what plan have you for fixing our language?

Tooke. This[12] is impossible in any; but it is possible to do much, and an authority like yours would have effected it by perpetuating the orthography. On the contrary, I observe in your *Dictionary* some quotations in which the words are spelled differently from what I find them in the original; nor have you admitted all those in Littleton, who compiled his *Latin Dictionary* at a recent period.

Johnson. First, I wrote the words as people now receive them; then, as to Littleton, many of his are vulgar.

Tooke. The more English for that. No expression, be it only free from indecency, is so vulgar that a man of learning and genius may not formerly have used it; but there are many so frivolous and fantastical that they cannot, to the full extent of the word, ever become vulgar. There are but four places where such bad language is tolerated and acknowledged,— the cock-pit, the boxing-ring, the race-course, and the House of Commons.

Johnson. I could wish our Senate to have deserved as well of

[11 From "A" to "he" (6 lines) added in 3rd ed.]
[12 From "This" to "spelling" (23 lines) occurs in the 1st ed.]

ours as the Roman did of theirs. Illiterate men, and several such are among the correspondents of Cicero, write with as much urbanity and purity as himself; and it is remarkable that the only one of them defective in these qualities is Marcus Antonius the triumvir. But pray give me some more instances in which the spelling[18] should be improved.

Tooke. Many must escape me, and others are but analogical: I will then bring forward only those which occur principally. The word which has just escaped my lips, *occur*, is written improperly with a single *r*. The same may be remarked on the finals of *rebel*, *compel*, &c.

Johnson. Why should the compound have this potency? It would be more reasonable (however little so) to write *sel* and *fil*, as B. Jonson and many others did; because there could be no ambiguity in the pronunciation.

Tooke. On the same system, if system it can be called, we write *aver*, *demur*, *appal*, *acquit*, *permit*, *refit*, *confer*, &c. If these were printed as they ought to be, strangers would more easily know that the accent is on the final syllable. I wish we wrote *drole* instead of *drôl*, *drolery* instead of *drollery*, which are discountenanced by the French, and unsupported by our pronunciation. In like manner, why not *controle?* In the time of Elizabeth good authors wrote *vittals:* and long afterward *applie*, *allie*, *relie*, which we should do if we wrote *lie*. *Haughty* and *naughty* may drop some useless letters, and appear characteristically *hauty* and *nauty: heinous* is *hainous* by descent.

We ourselves in some instances have lost the right accent of words. In my youth, he would have been ridiculed who placed it upon the first syllable of *confiscated*, *contemplative*, *conventicle*,* at which the ear revolts: in many other compounds we thrust it thus back with equal precipitancy and rudeness. We have

[18 First ed. reads: "the old spelling should be retained, for I am unwilling to suppose that you would innovate." In the 1st and 2nd eds. Tooke speaks from "Many" to "rudeness" (25 lines below). He uses different examples of spelling and pronunciation to those which now appear, but it has not been thought worth while to note the changes.]

* A clever poet of our day writes,—

"Of the plebeian àspirant,"

and,—

"We dèsignate the practical."

sinned and are sinning most grievously against our fathers and mothers. We shall "rèpent," and "rèform," and "rèmonstrate," and be "rèjected" at last.

Johnson.[14] Certainly it does appear strange that the man who habitually says "dèmonstrate" should never say "rè-monstrate."

Tooke. Sackville, a great authority, writes,—

"Tossed and tòrmented with tedious thought."

Milton's exquisite ear saved him in general from harshness. He writes, "Travèrsing the colure." How much better is aggràndize than àggrandize! Dryden, in the *Annus Mirabilis*, writes,—

"Instructed ships shall sail to quick commèrce."

We have suffered to drop away from us the beautiful and commodious word bequeathed to our language by this author, the word *painture*. Surely, it corresponds more closely with *sculpture* and *architecture* than the participle we convert into a substantive to replace it. On the same principle, why not *dancery* for *dancing*, as we find it in Chapman? How refreshing, how delicious, is a draught of pure home-drawn English, from a spring a little sheltered and shaded, but not entangled in the path to it, by antiquity!

Among the words of which the accent has been transposed to their disadvantage are *confessor* and *convex*, from the second to the first. *Sojourn* is by no means inharmonious if you place the accent where it ought to be, as in *adjourn;* but you render it one of the harshest in our language by your violation of *analogy* in perverting it. *Adverse*[15] is accented on the first syllable, *reverse* and *perverse* on the second: pray, why? Milton writes,—

"That heard th' *Advèrsary*, who roving stil," &c.

Shakspeare writes *aspèct*, *upright*, *upròar*.* The magnificent

[14] From "*Johnson*" to "antiquity" (19 lines) added in 3rd ed.]
[15] From "*Adverse*" to "mother" (29 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

* Our living poets have contributed much to throw back the accent: Wordsworth in particular. Even Southey, solid and many-sided as a basaltic column, lends his support here. He writes *èxploits* three several times, and *prómulgate* and *còntemplate*.

word *uprôar* is used by Milton: how different from the *ùproar* of the streets! He uses *aspèct* as Shakspeare did, and *upright*. He also has the fine adjective *deform*. Who does not see that *uprìght* is better than *ùpright?* Then let him read the noble lines of Milton upon Man:—

"Who, indued
With sanctity of reason, might erect
His stature, and uprìght with front serene
Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence
Magnanimous to correspond with Heaven."

Johnson. I agree with you, sir. *Aristocrat, concordance, contrary, industry, inimical, contemplate, conculcate, detail, Alexander, sonorous, sublunary* (what becomes of Milton's "*interlunar* cave?") *desultory, peremptory*, and many more, are now pronounced by the generality (who always adopt some signal folly) differently from the custom of our fathers, and accentuated on the first syllable.

Tooke. But even the Greeks, at a time when eloquence was highly flourishing, threw back the accent. In the words ὁμοιος and τροπαιον it rested on the second syllable with Æschylus and Thucydides; on the first with Plato and Aristoteles. The very same word was differently accentuated in its different senses: for instance μητρὸκτονος, slain *by* a mother: μητροκτὸνος, the slayer of a mother. The common people still pronounce *contrary* with the accent where it should be. We throw it back on the first in *acceptable*, and not in *accessible;* yet it is on the second in *accept*, and on the first in *access*. We[16] continue to say *recèss*, but we begin to say *àccess:* the first innovation was in *pròcess*. Dryden writes,—

"Swift of despatch and easy of access."

Shakspeare very properly lays the accent on the second syllable of *importune*,—

"Have you impôrtuned him?"

In conversation we often, indeed mostly, use *'em* for *them:* why not in writing? I would always do it after *th;* as *with 'em*. In the Scotch dialect, *wi'* for *with* has peculiar grace.*

[16 From "We" to "him?" (7 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

* In the ode of Burns, how incomparably better are the words, *Scots wha hae wi'*, than, *who have with!*

Nothing is absurder than that, writing the aspirate, we should use it in some words, omit it in others. In polished society I have remarked none aspirated very distinctly, excepting *happy* and *hard*, with the substantives, though *a* precedes many, not *an*. Is it that we sigh (for to aspirate is nothing else in the mode of utterance) as much at what we wish in the former as at what we feel in the latter?

Johnson. I do not know: if your observation is just, it must be so; though the remark seems out of your line and beyond your feeling. The[17] common people are fond of aspirates, and only omit them when they ought not.

Tooke. It is curious that *fortune* and *happiness* are in no language allied, nearly or remotely, to virtue or merit. In ours they are both of them named from chance.

> "What if within the moon's fair shining sphere,
> What if in every other star unseen,
> Of other worlds he *happily* should hear."

for *haply*.

The Greeks were more pious, one would imagine, than our ancestors. They entertained the same opinion about fortune, but believed that happiness was the gift of good genii, or gods,—*eudaimonia*.

Johnson. Pray tell me now, sir, what we should do? Will you put me upon your knee and teach me? Should we pronounce all our aspirated syllables as such, or none?

Tooke. Certainly we should no more add a mark of aspiration to a word wherein it is not used, than a mark of interrogation.

Johnson. You are a strange man, sir; why, this is true, too! Can you be still a Whig?

Tooke. No, Doctor, nor ever was. I wore one livery, and threw it off as an encumbrance; I will not wear another which is both an encumbrance and a disgrace. I have never been even a swindler; now I must not only be a swindler, but a gambler too,[18] if I sit down among the knaves who have so cheated us.

[17 From "The" to "not" (2 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[18 Second ed. reads: "too, and a liar and an impostor, if I hold the rank my forces entitle me to amongst the whigs. *Johnson*," &c.]

Johnson. Swindler, as we understand it, is the worse character of the two.

Tooke. By no means so in fact. Any gambler may gamble every day and night in the seven, and most of them do, while few swindlers can swindle above the half. And their stakes are lighter, and such as can affect only their personalities: an hour's attendance on the public when they have nothing else to do, and from a station no less secure than commanding, and then immediately a quiet and long recess from the management of affairs. Gambling[19] is the origin of more extensive misery than all other crimes put together: and the mischief falls principally on the unoffending and helpless. It leads by insensible degrees a greater number of wretches to the gallows, than the higher atrocities from which that terminus is seen more plainly. And yet statesmen make it the means of revenue, and kings bestow on it the title of *royal* under the name of lottery. The royal lottery-keeper is both a gambler and a swindler; for in his playing he knows that the stake he lays down is unequal to his opponent's. I keep aloof, not only from these pick-pockets, but also aside from the confederate gang who fain would hustle me against them. Moreover, I belong to no party.

Johnson.[20] That sounds well: and yet he surely is a bad man, sir, who forms no affinities; a solitary sceptic; the blind man in *blind man's buff*, unable to stand a moment on either side, or to fix upon any one about him.

Tooke. All this is true, Doctor. I am a bad man, but exactly in the contrary of the word's original meaning, which I thank you for reminding me of. A *bad* man is a *bade* man, or *bidden* man; a slave in other words: and the same idea was attached to the expression by the Italians and the French (while their language and they had a character) in *cattivo* and *chétif*, and by us in *caitiff*, men in no other condition than that wherein they must do as they are *bid*. We should ourselves have been in no higher condition, if we had not resisted what, in palaces and churches and colleges, was called legitimate power; and indeed we should still be, rather than men, a pliant unsubstantial herbage,

[19 From "Gambling" to "party" (12 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[20 Second ed. reads: "*Johnson* . . . well: it comes from a full cup tho' a cracked one: and yet you are a bad man," &c.]

springing up from under the smoky, verminous, unconcocted doctrine of passive obedience, to be carted off by our kings amid their carols, and cocked and ricked and cut, and half-devoured, half-trampled, and wasted, in the pinfold of our priesthood.

If[21] we take away a letter from the words I have stated, we add one with as little discernment to *therefor* and *wherefur ;* we should as reasonably write *thereofe*, *whereofe*, *thereine*, *whereine :* strictly, it would be better to take away one *e* more, and write *therefor*, as was done formerly. I know the origin of the error: the origin may *explain* but not *excuse*. It is this: the ancients wrote *therforre*. The useless *r* was removed from an infinity of words; and those who removed it in this instance were little aware that they had better left it, unless they also took away the *e*. We[22] write *solely* not *soly*; yet we do not write *idlely* but *idly :* we should about as properly write *barly* for *barley*.

Johnson. I doubt whether you would gain any thing by taking this *barly* to market.

Tooke. I should be cried out against as loudly as you were (on another occasion) for your *oats*. If we write *incur* and *recur*, why not *succur ;* if *monster*, why not *theater ;* if *barometer*, why not *meter ?*

Johnson. After all, Mr Tooke, I must pronounce it as my opinion, that we should do very well in continuing to write as we write at present.

Tooke. With due submission, I will not pronounce but suggest that nothing is done very well which can be done better. In several words we follow the French without any reason; and we do not follow them where they have seen and abandoned their error. For instance, we follow them in *theatre*, which they spell according to the genius of their language and the exigence of their verse, but contrary to ours; to be consistent we should spell *letter*, *lettre*. I[23] do not see why *little*, *able*, *probable*,

[21] From "If" to "*e*" (10 lines) occurs in the 1st ed.]

[22] From "We" to "lettre" (19 lines) added in 3rd ed. Second ed. reads: "the *e*. I would write until, til, and stil: the latter words, both for analogy and for distinction, from the adjective *still*. I mean I would write in this manner if I had any grave authority before me; for without it laws in language are no more to be infringed or modified than laws in politics. I do not see," &c.]

[23] From "I" to "subtility" (8 lines) occurs in 1st ed.; from "as" to "consistency (8 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

&c., should not be written *littil*, *abil*, *probabil*: as *civil* forms *civility*, so *abil* forms *ability*, *probabil* forms *probability*; the others, as we corruptly use them, form *ablety* and *probablety*. There is also another reason: in verse there is a hiatus when they come before a vowel, which hiatus could not exist if we followed what analogy prescribes. I strongly object to *subtle* and *subtlety*, and would propose *subtil* and *subtility*, as *fertil* and *fertility*. From *epistle* and *apostle*, "epistolary" and "apostolical" cannot be formed; they may be, and are, from "epistol" and "apostol" It is lucky that "angels" are not as ill-treated as "apostles." If I am to have an *apostle*, I may as well have a *symble*. I would retain in spelling and in everything else, whatever old manners and old customs are commodious: I would discountenance all the newer which violate propriety or shake consistency. Why should *proceed* and *succeed* be spelled in one way, *precede* and *accede* in another? Why should not the two former be written n the second syllable like the two latter?

Johnson. I know not: I think it would be better.

Tooke. I do not go so far in these matters as your friend Elphinstone; and although I would be a reformer, my reform should be temperate and topical. Many have written *exil* for *banishment*: I would constantly do so, and *exile* for *banished man*.

Johnson. The distinction has not been observed by any one, and would be commodious.

Tooke. You might imagine from the spelling that *complain* and *explain* were of the same origin. To avoid this error, I would follow the authors who have written the latter word *explane*; and the rather, as the substantive is *explanation*, not *explaination*, nor *explaint*. *Passenger* and *messenger* are coarse and barbarous for *passager* and *messager*, and nothing the better for having been adopted into polite society. It[24] may soon admit *sausinges*. Middleton, we have seen, writes *declaime*, and elegantly: Milton writes *sovran* and *foren* equally so; for neither the pronunciation nor the etymology authorizes the vitiated mode in common use. These writers may be considered as modern; both must be considered as learned, one as eloquent; and, until men who are more

[24 From "It" to "sausinges" added in 3rd ed.; from "Middleton" to "differently" (6 lines) occur in 1st ed., which reads: "differently, these shall be my guides."]

so write differently, Milton at least shall be my guide. A[25] beautiful adjective in *Paradise Lost* hath ceased to be used in prose or even in poetry,—*alterne.*

> "The greater to have rule by day,
> The less by night, *alterne.*"

Alternate would serve more properly for the verb.

There is hardly a writer of the Elizabethan age who will not induce us to hesitate on our spelling, or rather who will not suggest some improvement. *Abbot*, from *abbas*, should be spelled *abbat*, as Tanner spells it. Massinger[26] writes *carroch*, from *carozza:* our *carriage* is inelegant. Jonson, in his verses to Wroth, says,—

> "In autumn at the *partrich* mak'st a flight."

I would write the word so, if it were for no other reason than that we write *ostrich* in the same manner.

Johnson. I remember two of his verses for a word to be corrected in them:—

> "When thy latest sand is spent,
> Thou mayest think life a thing but lent."

It would then be too late: *when* should be *ere.*

Tooke. True.

Johnson. As *fire* and *sire* and *hour* and *four* sometimes are dissyllables in the old poets, so likewise are *year* and *sure;* while *entire* and *desire* are trisyllables; *contrary*, a quadrisyllable. They spelled indifferently and wrote arbitrarily. Shakspeare takes no liberties of this kind unauthorised in fact or analogy by other writers more scholastic.

Tooke. They favor my proposition of spelling by *il* what we spell by *le:* such as *humbil, dazzil, tickil;* for in whatever way

[25 From "A" to "verb" (6 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

[26 From "Massinger" to "inelegant" added in 3rd ed. Second ed reads: "He and Shakspeare, I am inclined to think, often wrote fier as well as fire; we still retain the trace of it in the adjective fiery. In those poets it occurs as a dissyllable, although in the printed copies it is fire. I find it in the poem I have quoted, which pleases me better than any other of the same author. I only wish he had omitted the last lines taken from Juvenal. *Johnson.* I remember them for a," &c.]

they wrote the word, they often make a trisyllable of *humbled* and *dazzled.*

"And[27] that hath dazzled my reason's light,"

says Shakspeare; and in *Henry VI.* he makes a trisyllable of "*English.*"

Johnson. I know not what advantages we can obtain from a perception of crudities and barbarisms, unless it be that it enables us to estimate more correctly the great improvements we have made in later times. But I admit that we might have retained a few things to our advantage. Who would read Chaucer and Spenser for their language?

Tooke. Spenser I would not, delightful as are many parts of his poetry; but Chaucer I would read again and again both for his poetry and his language.

Johnson. I suppose, sir, you prefer the dialect of Thomson, a Whig, to Spenser's?

Tooke. No, Doctor, his is worse still; but there are images and feelings in his *Winter*, in comparison with which the liveliest in Spenser are faint.

Johnson. And those too, no doubt, on the same subject in the *Georgics!*

Tooke. Beyond a question. It appears to me that there is more poetry in it than in the whole of that elaborate poem, beautiful as it is in versification and in language; both of which are wanting in almost every place to Thomson.

Johnson. Oh! you do acknowledge then that the versification is elaborate, and the language beautiful!

Tooke. Doctor, I hate carping. Where much is good in a man or a poem I would always mention it; and where in the same man or poem there is a little bad, I would pass it over.

Johnson. What is the bad, sir, in the *Georgics?* Come, I have you now off the ground: your strength, such as it is, has left you.

[27] From "And" to "says" added in 3rd ed. Second ed. reads: "Shakspeare in Henry VI.," &c. Five lines below, from "But" to "advantage" added in 3rd ed.]

Tooke. May all men's strength leave them when they would make invidious objections!

Johnson. Rare subterfuge! Virgil is a dead prince, sir; you cannot hurt him.

Tooke. Far be the wish from me! I would act toward him as the pious ancients did toward the dead: I would wash him first, and afterward perfume him with the most precious unguents.

Johnson. Up with your sleeves then, and begin the washing! Here, take the *Georgics;* I usually carry them about me.

Tooke. Has[28] Ovid, has Lucan, has any other latin Poet, written such balderdash and bombast as the nineteen verses in the beginning, at the close of an invocation already much too prolix? Why all these additions to the modest prayer of Varro, which he has versified? Here let me suggest a new and a necessary reading just above these lines:—

"Quique novas alitis non *ullo* semine fruges."

It must be *uno,* to avoid nonsense,—which is always a benefit, even in poetry,—and so represent *wheat, barley, oats,* &c.; that is to say "not only one kind of grain." The lines of the letter *n* and the double *l* may have been much alike in manuscript, and may have easily misled transcribers. I will not dwell upon the verses after

"Tethys emat omnibus undis;"

but really those eight appear to me like an excrescence on the face of a beautiful boy.

Johnson. They are puerile, are they?—a blemish, a deformity!

Tooke. In honest truth I think so.

Johnson. You have turned over only one leaf: the faults must lie thick.

Tooke. Somewhat. Beginning again at the eighty-first line, I find the *earth* ending that and all the five following, with one exception, *agros, arva, terræ, agros,* flammis, *terræ.*

Johnson. I do not credit you.

Tooke. Take the book.

Johnson. No, sir, I will not take the book: read on.

[28 From "Has" to "transcribers" (11 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

Tooke. In the next page, *arvis, arva, arva,* close the verse within twelve successive lines. In the next beyond, *moveri, removit, repressit,* one after the other; and immediately after, "extund*eret* artes," "quær*eret* herbam," and "excud*eret* ignem." Three more pages, and the words *convivia curant* are followed in the next verse by "*curas*que resolvit." May I express my delight at—

Johnson. No, sir! no, sir! no delight about any thing! Spit your spite.

Tooke. Since you are so urgent in your commands, I will proceed. Beginning from the 406th verse, there are thirteen which end with spondaic words. In the second book,

"Et gens illa quidem sumptis non tarda pharetris"

is another excrescence; and in the following we find *tardumque* saporem.

Johnson. Sir, can you construe that line? I doubt it.

Tooke. Instruct me then.

Johnson. You, being a word-catcher, ought to know that our word *tart*, for *sharp*, corresponds with *tardus*.

Tooke. I perceive the commentator gives this interpretation; a very wrong one. *Tart* is not related to *tardus*. Virgil means that the citron ripens late. Before we reach the 300th line, here are together twelve more ending with spondaic words. Now, my dear sir, do let me give utterance to my enthusiasm on "O fortunatos nimium!" Permit [29] my raptures at sitting down among the "*saltus et lustra ferarum*,"—the feeling is so new. Did I hear one of them? methought I heard a growl, or something similar.

Johnson. Go on, sir, and mind your business.

Tooke. Well then: *rura* ends one line, *jura* the next. "Atque alio *patriam*" — then, with one line between — "*hinc patriam.*" "Pascitur in *magna* sylvâ," and just below, "*magnus* Olympus." Doctor, how do you construe "*Odor attulit auras*"?

Johnson. That is an hypallage, sir.

Tooke. But construe it.

[29 From "Permit" to "new" (2 lines) added in 3rd ed. Two lines below, from "*Johnson*" to "then" (2 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

Johnson. One must reverse the sense.

Tooke. A pretty idea of poetry. His [30] *odor attulit auras* is like Shakspeare's "*The oats have eaten the horses;*" but Shakspeare's was fun, and Virgil's was affectation. In fact the hypallage, of which Virgil is fonder than any other writer, is much the gravest fault in language.

Johnson. What, sir! graver than solecism?

Tooke. Yes, Doctor; in the same degree as nonsense is worse than inelegance. A boy shouts at another boy and holds him in derision when he finds him putting, as he calls it, the cart before the horse. Onward, if you please: and here we find again, at *currentem ilignis*, fourteen final spondees without one bacchic foot among them. At last we arrive at that passage which provoked you to throw poor Thomson under the triumphal car of Virgil:—

> "Concrescunt subitæ currenti in flumine crustæ,
> Undaque jam *tergo* ferratos sustinet orbes,
> Puppibus illa prius patulis, nunc hospita plaustris."

These and the four following would make but an indifferent figure in the exercise of an Eton boy; there is no harmony, no fluency in them: they are broken pieces of ice. What think you, after "*Æraque dissiliunt vulgò*," of "*vestesque rigescunt*"? Such an instance of the art of sinking you will not find in the Latin, nor easily in any other poetry. What follows is much better; but it will bear no comparison with the Miltonian description, in Thomson, of the frozen regions visited by the caravan from Cathay.

Johnson. Sir, even the description of Orpheus and Eurydice could not stir your cold blood!

Tooke. Doctor, you have formed your judgment upon it; let me reflect and hesitate a little before I deliver mine.

Johnson. Now I would lay a wager that all this magnificence is not worth your Scotch-Cathay caravan!

Tooke. I would do the same.

Johnson. Then, sir, you have either no sense of shame or no soul for poetry.

Tooke. On *shame* and *soul* the discussion might be unsatisfac-

[30] From "His" to "affectation" (3 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

tory. But let us, my dear sir, survey together the character of Proteus. Nothing can be harder, unless it be myself: he must be chained to make him civil or tractable, to make him render the slightest and easiest service to any one. He had no affinity or friendship, no community of character or country, with Orpheus and Eurydice. One would think he could have known little about them, and cared less. In a monster, for such he was, and so unfeeling and solitary, the description is far from natural; and even in Virgil himself, who seems to have forgotten that he was not speaking in his own person, it would have been somewhat overcharged. The Homeric simile of the nightingale, and the silly tale of a head speaking when it was cut off and rolling down a river, and speaking so loud, too, as to make an echo on the banks, is puerile, absurd, and preposterous.

Johnson. The verses on the nightingale are inharmonious, no doubt?

Tooke. I did not say it; but some parts are. Beside, "*mærens, queritur, flet, miserabile, mæstis:*" surely we do not want all at once, nor to express one feeling. *Observans nido implumes detraxit* is as inharmonious as any verse can easily be made. On the whole, how much better would the episode have been if Proteus had said little, and if Cyrene had given the description!

Johnson. You know nothing of poetry; but that last remark is true. Who suggested it?

Tooke. Doctor Johnson; when he favored me with the volume which I now return to him.

Johnson. Sir, you carry your revolutionary and chaotic principles into the fields and groves, into the woods and mountains, and render more fierce and gloomy the winds and tempests and eternal snows. You have no love of order even in works of art.

Tooke. Doctor, we were talking just now of dissyllables and trisyllables and Chaucer. He writes,—

"With Theseus the squire principal."

Johnson. If you quote such metre, you may quote that also which was

"Written by William Prynne esquire, the
Year of our Lord six hundred thirty-three."

Tooke. Never did the muses sail to their antipodes so expeditiously as under the steerage of their new Tiphys, if you on this occasion will let me call you so.

Johnson. Call me anything, sir, rather than call Thomson a writer of English.

Tooke. Affectation is his greatest fault: and it is a matter of wonder to me that he seldom errs on any other side. I[31] do not remember that he confuses, as the Scotch and Irish do perpetually, *shall* and *will*. We ourselves confound them without knowing it; but idiomatically.

Johnson. In what manner? Good writers never do.

Tooke. For instance, *You will be burned if you touch the tea-urn. Shall I be burned if I touch the tea-urn?* Here the action and time are the same, yet the words differ. In fact, "*will I*" can only be used in the rebutment of a question; as when a person asks, *Will you or will you not?* and the reply, instead of affirmation or negative, is angrily, *Will I or will I not?* in which is understood, *Do you ask* me thus? To another we say, "*Shall I?*" and he replies, "*If you will.*"

These things, Doctor, would appear trifling to trifling men; but not to you, who cannot be less curious in the philosophy of a language than in its etymology.

Johnson. Let us stop where we are, and while we are innocent. Philosophy in these matters draws us away to analysis: the dry *seta equina* of analysis breaks into pieces, in one or two of which pieces we soon descry the restless heads and wriggling tails of metaphysics. Sir, metaphysics lead to materialism, and materialism to atheism. Those who do not see this see nothing: but there are more who see it than will confess it. Of what value is any thing, although it should conduce at first to some truth even less dry and sterile, if in its progression it renders men insincere, and in its termination unhappy? Anatomize words, flay, dissect, eviscerate language, but keep your faith out of the crucible, for the daily use and sustenance of your family.

[31 See Boswell iii. 37. "Dr Johnson said, 'Thomson had a true poetical genius, the power of viewing every thing in a poetical light. His fault is such a cloud of words that the sense can hardly peep through.'" Johnson's detestation of the Scotch was not wholly indiscriminate. Landor has not spent much trouble on the characters of this Conversation.]

Tooke. I began to fear, Doctor, that you would have concluded your sentence in another manner.

Johnson. In what manner, sir?

Tooke. That you would have said, *to go to market with*, for the daily use and sustenance of my family. My faith, I do assure you, I keep both out of the crucible and out of the *aqua regia*,—another great melter and transmuter. My dear sir, I would divert the gathering storm of your anger by any propitiation and concession.

Johnson. Rogue!

Tooke. Excellently and most opportunely introduced. I could say something upon that word too; but I doubt whether it would be so agreeable to you as another of which I was thinking. In your reading of our ancient poets, particularly our dramatists, you must have observed that *kind* is frequently used for *nature*. This is a beautiful feature in our language. Our ancestors identified *nature* with *kindness*. I love our old modes of thinking in most things, and of speaking in many. We have several ancient words used at present in a different sense from what they were formerly; *rogue* for instance.

Johnson. No sedition, sir! no vague allusions! no contempt of authority! I know who rogues are, as well as you do; but I abstain from throwing a firebrand into their houses, and lighting the populace to pillage and murder.

Tooke. Well judged!—the populace has no right to any such things.

Johnson. Strange! marvellous! You enunciate even these sentences,—the most detestable, the most impious, the most seditious,—uninflamed, unwarmed; like your chemists, who pour from one bottle into another, just as unconcernedly, I know not what pestiferous and heavy air of theirs, if report speaks truly, corking it down until they can find something to set the whole of it in a blaze; and thus teaching us that what is the lowest in its nature is the most destructive in its application.

Tooke. Doctor, in the asbestine quality of my mind, with the flames and fagots on both sides, you appear to see a miracle: if you could see more clearly, you would discover in it Christianity without one.

Johnson (*aside*). I did not imagine that this logical wrong-head could balance and swing and dandle me so easily.

I recollect no expression in Chaucer worth retaining and not retained.

Tooke. What think you of *swough*, the long-continued sound of wind?—

"a *swough*
As thof a storme should brasten every bough."
PALAMON AND ARCITE.

Johnson. It sounds grandly: there is something of a melancholy and a lonely wildness in it.

Tooke. The Scotch retain it still, spelling it *sugh*.

Johnson. Let them keep it, sir, to themselves. I would not give a straw for it. We want neither harsh words nor obsolete ones.

Tooke. Suppose we found in Chaucer some words less harsh in their pronunciation than they appear at present; and others, if not less so, yet useful for variety or for rhyme: such are *beforne*, before, *withouten*, without, *somdel*, somewhat, *astonned*, astonished, *brast* and *brasten*, burst or broken, and many more.

Johnson. Let our language rest where it is.

Tooke. Languages, like men, when they have rested long and totally, grow heavy and plethoric: we must renew their juices, and bring them back into their native air.

We have *presently*, but want *futurely*, used by Fletcher in the *Two noble Kinsmen*. Fashionable[32] people turn nosegays out of doors, and send to France for *bouquets*. Why have we forgotten our more beautiful *posy*, of which Spenser and Swift were not disdainful? Among the rich furniture of our ancestors, which we cast aside, may be reckoned a certain two-handed instrument of great utility and strength. *By* and *of* were employed by them at their option. Shakspeare says,—

"Unwhipt of Justice,"

We now abandon altogether the better usage: I would have reserved both. We use the word *bat* for various things; among the rest, for that animal which partakes the nature of bird and mouse: why not call it, at least in poetry, what Ben Jonson does, *flittermouse?* The word in all respects is better; it is more

[32 From "Fashionable" to "disdainful" (4 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

dstinguishing, more descriptive, and our language is by one the richer for it.

Johnson. The reasons are valid and unobjectionable.

Tooke. The verb to *beat* is the same in its present tense and in its preterite; so irregularly and improperly, that you cannot but have observed how people avoid the use of it in the latter.

Johnson. The Romans did the same in their *ferio.* Instead of taking a preterite from it, they used *percussi.* I think, however, that I have somewhere seen the preterite, *bate.*

Tooke. We had our choice either to follow the inflection of *cheat* or *eat;* we took the latter, and then would have neither. I am afraid of reminding you where you probably last met with *bate,* which you seem looking after.

Johnson. Subdue your blushes, my gentle sir, and conduct me back to the place, be it where it may.

Tooke. The Irishman in Fielding's *Tom Jones* says, "He *bate* me."

Johnson. What we hear from an Irishman we are not overfond of repeating, whether in grammar or fact: but in this case our risibility is excited by the circumstances rather than the language, although the language too has its share in it. The dialect is Hibernian.

Tooke. We certainly should not either smile at the expression in a vulgar countryman of our own, nor condemn it in a learned discourse from the pulpit.

Johnson. I would not hesitate to employ it in graver composition.

Tooke. Nor I: for authors much richer both in thought and language than any now living, or any recently deceased, have done so.

Johnson. If we begin to reinstate old words, we shall finish by admitting new ones.

Tooke. There would be the less danger of that, as there would be the less need. Yet even new words may be introduced with good effect, and particularly when the subject is ludicrous.

Johnson. Phrynicus and Julius Pollux animadvert with severity on Menander for inventing new words, and for using such others as were unknown in Attica: and perhaps this is the reason why he was frequently vanquished by Polemon in the contest for the

prize of comedy. Gellius tells us, on the authority, I think, of Apollodorus, that, although he wrote a hundred and five pieces, he was the victor but in eight.

Tooke. And if we could recover them all, we should find probably those eight the very worst among them, and the only ones that fairly could admit a competition. When Menander asked Polemon whether he did not blush at being his vanquisher, the answer (I can well imagine) was another such suffusion; and not, as would have been the case if there were any room for it, that the inelegance or inexactness of Menander turned the countenance of the judges from him. He was considered by the best critics of succeeding ages as the most Attic of the Athenians; and certainly was not the less so for employing those expressions, novel or foreign, which suited the characters he introduced. A word may be excellent in a dialogue, which would deteriorate and deform an oration. Julius Pollux, I remember, disapproves of many words used by Plato and Herodotus. Now, although Plato is often flat and insipid, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus demonstrates by examples, yet I cannot think he ever used a term improperly or unfitly. In regard to Herodotus, his style I consider as the most proper, the most pure, the most simply and inelaborately harmonious of any author in any language. His genius, what rarely happens, is well seconded and sustained by his spirit of research and his delight in knowledge. He has been censured for a deficiency of elevation. Many can judge of elevation in phraseology; fewer of that which is attained by an elastic vigour in the mind, keeping up easily a broad continuance of imaginative thought. This is almost as necessary to matter of fact as to poetry, if the matter of fact is worthy to be impressed on the memory or understanding.

How much better is *disherited* than *disinherited; innerest* than *innermost.* How much more properly is *tongue* written *tong, fruit rute, suit, sute, friend, frend, atchieve, acheve.* We[33] derive *conceive, receive, perceive,* through the French, who never thrust into them the letter *i:* why then should we? These are not new modes: we find them in the time of Spenser, and most of them in his works. He writes the verbs *wil* and *shal:* he also writes *til* and *ontil.* He would not do so unless others whom he esteemed

[33 From "we" to "we?" (3 lines) added in 3rd Ed.]

as good authors had given him the example; for his rhyme, which he favors at any rate, did not exact it. Anciently[34] *work* was spelled *werke*, as we continue to pronounce it. The final vowel in this word and many others was retained long after its use had ceased.

Johnson. Of what use was it?

Tooke. It often served to form a dissyllable in the plural and in the genitive singular, as we find in Chaucer; and it was not only in poetry that it was thus pronounced.

Johnson. Raleigh uses the grand word *sumptuosity*, ill exchanged for *costliness* or *expensiveness*.

Tooke. I have lately heard *illustrate* for illùstrate: we shall presently come to impèrceptible. We have *aspect*, *prospect*, *respect*, *retrospect*; we formerly had also the substantive *suspect*. Raleigh uses it: "But this was not his manner of reasoning with Hastings, whose fidelity to his master's sons was without *suspect*." We have moreover his authority, and Hooker's, for *possest*, *exprest*, *supprest*, *confest*, *mockt*. He writes *samplar*, and *begger*: we, very improperly, *sampler* and *beggar*. Milton, the great master of our language and its harmonies, accents on the second syllable, *consùlt* (the substantive), *accèss*, *procèss*, *advèrse*, *aspèct*, *convèrse*, *insùlts* (substantive), *contèst* (substantive), *impùlse*, *pretèxt*, *blasphèmous*, *crystàlline*, *remèdiless*, *surfàce*, *triùmphed*, *contrìte*, *marìtime*, *product*, *prescrìpt*, *conflàgrant*. You perceive by these accentuations how obtuse are the ears of our fashionable poets in comparison with Milton's. *Prune* and *preen* are the same word, meaning to *trim*; but it would be well to apply *prune* exclusively to the trimming of trees, and *preen* exclusively to the trimming of the feathers by birds. Dryden and Pope use *prune* in the latter sense, misled by what they found printed in Shakspeare, who, rich in the phraseology of the country, wrote (I am confident) *preen*. South writes *an* before *high*. Addison writes *superiour*; Milton, Taylor, Locke, and Swift, *superior*. In many instances the spelling of Chaucer is more easy, more graceful and elegant, than the modern: for example, where he avoids the diphthongs *ea*, *oa*, and the reduplication of the vowel in the following:—

> "In *cote* and hode of *grene*
> A *shefe* of peacocke arwes brighte and *kene*."

[34 From "Anciently" to "another" (70 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

This was continued for many centuries, and we find it in Ben Johnson: who also writes *cossen* (cousin), *linage*, *coles*, *pen'd*, *dore*, *ake*, *balkt*, *bewitcht*, *finde*, *purchast*, *hoopt*, *confest*, *cloke*, *nere*, *borne*, *onlly*, *kist*, *beleeve*, *sute*, *cloke*, *armor*, *jayle*, *stript*, *clensd*, *reproch*, *dote*, *stretcht*, *stampt*, *lothe*, *polisht*, *iland*, *accomplisht*, *starcht*, *tand*, *neere*, *furnisht*, *crackt*, *brest*, *smel*, *led*, *wel*, *stabd*, *mockt*, *pluckt*, *incenst*, *scepter*, *theater*, *theeves*, *fetcht*, *supprest*, *flote*, *distinguisht*, *doo* (do), *honor* (both verb and substantive), *profest*, *deprest*, *prest*. We have altered every one of those spellings: can any man tell me which in the whole number is altered for the better?

Johnson. How would you deal with the preterite of such a verb as *notice?*

Tooke. It must be *noticed:* and I wish we were obliged to pronounce distinctly each of its three syllables. Countrymen in the midland shires have preserved the verb *notize*, like *prize* and *advertize*. I wish we never had rejected it, and had kept *notice* for the substantive only.

Johnson. I have remarked the preterite spelled *notic'd*, and by writers of reputation, in the beginning of this century.

Tooke. Wonderful, but perfectly true. I would rather see Grammar a shrew than a slattern. There are hours and occasions when she needs not be full-dressed; there are none when it is pardonable in her to come down with tangled hair. There are fictions in our laws, and there are fictions also in our language: *notic'd*, *entic'd*, are examples. We have seen them printed; we never have heard or can hear them pronounced. Bottles in print are *corked*, in the cellars they are *corkt*: no human voice ever uttered *cork'd*. Since we have two ways, why take that which leads us wrong? We have both *blest* and *blessed;* but we have not both *prest* and *pressed*, *carest* and *caressed*. Like the Achilles of Horace, who "jura negat sibi nata," &c., we seize upon what does not belong to us, and cast aside what does: we speak one thing and write another.

We never say *patriarchical*, yet we say *monarchical* and *anarchical:* harsh words! Since the choice is left me by prescription in the one, by analogy in the other, I would constantly write *anarchal* and *monarchal*. It[35] occurs to me now, what I should have mentioned before if I had thought of it at the time when we were

[35] From "It" to "origin" (8 lines) added to 3rd edition.

speaking on the subject, that Fairfax, instead of writing *embraced*, wrote (as many did) *embrast*.

> "Gather the rose of love, while yet thou *maist*,
> Loving be loved, embracing be *embrast*."

Johnson. Indeed, the word "embra*se*" comes more directly from its origin.

Tooke. Ménage tells us that he did the contrary of what was done by the Academy. "They fill their dictionary," says he, "with words in use: I take greater care, in my etymologies, of those which are no longer so, so that they may not be quite forgotten."

Johnson. Both did right. It is interesting to trace the features of a language in every stage of its existence. I wish you would do it, Mr Tooke,—I have done enough: it must be the exercise of learned leisure, and not of him whose daily bread is dipped in ink.

Tooke. Doctor, there was a time when I sighed at what raised my admiration. I thought it was over: your last words renew it. I am not the adviser of pensions,—I should be happy to see the greater part of them struck off: but more gladly still should I read an Act of Parliament, in pursuance of which ten were established in perpetuity for our ten best writers. Five of them should enjoy five hundred a year, the other three closing only when preferment of higher value were given them.

Johnson. And pray, sir, would you admit the partisan of rebellion to the advantages of this endowment?

Tooke. I would exclude none whatever for his opinions, political or theological. The minister who had granted such an indulgence to his opponent would indemnify himself by the acquisition of worthier supporters, attached to him by his magnanimity: the partisan of rebellion who accepted it would render but little service to his cause. The whole sum thus expended is barely what you throw upon the desk of the lowest scribbler, appointed Secretary (we will suppose) to the Board of Admiralty for some smutty song or pious pasquinade; barely what a vulgar commissary gains in one day's contract for bullocks; and therefore on neither side of the house would the motion find, consistently, any opponent who can spell and cast accounts. Since

the form of our Constitution is not such as admits every man of superior abilities to take the place he might occupy in one more popular, so slight amends may surely be made for the privation. I venture to assert that it would render our government more respected abroad than it is rendered by our armies and navies, and more beloved at home than it is by our assessments and excise.

Johnson. Ay, ay! among the ten we should find your name, no doubt!

Tooke. No, sir; my name is not to be where ten are at a time: beside, there is no minister whose exclusion of me would be unjustifiable. These two considerations make me speak openly and warmly. Few authors could recommend the motion: I dare to do it, excited by the neglected genius of my adversary here, and the glory no less neglected of my country.

Johnson. I would hardly be so ministerial on this point as you are: I would increase the value of the pension by making it depend on the vote of Parliament.

Tooke. This is better: we may suppose three names recommended by a committee on every vacancy.

Johnson. I perceive that you, in the midst of letters, always turn aside to the political.

Tooke. I wish, in the midst of the political, our representatives were turned for a moment to the consideration of letters. What I recommend is practicable and uncostly. Hardly one member of the Honorable House is interested in recommending a relative or friend: and I doubt whether, in all the ten to be chosen, more than two or three would be nominated on an unpaid bill, by coach-maker or fish-monger or tailor.

Johnston. Ah, false suitor! you have unwoven with your own hands Penelope's bright web. You might have left it to Penelope herself: night would have closed again on it in scattered filaments.

Tooke. No, my dear sir, I have not hurt the web; I have only puffed away a design of it which was never designed to be executed. Cadmus, who found letters, found also the dragon's teeth to be sown among them and to consume them. Now,[36] we are in Asia, let us turn it to our purposes, as others do.

[[36] From "Now" to "do" added in 3rd ed.]

The word *Tartar*, we are informed of late, is properly *Tatar* in its own language. Be it so: this is no sufficient reason why we also should be *Tatars* or speak *tatar*. The word *Tartar* has been received among us some centuries, and invariably used. *Caractacus*, *Cassibellmaus*, and *Britannia* are not exactly the British words: yet a Roman would have been ridiculed who, a hundred years after the reception of them, should rather have inserted the original British in his history. We are become well acquainted with *Mahomet:* but every man who has travelled in the East brings home a new name for the prophet, and trims his turban to his own taste.

Johnson. I am reminded of an observation I made the other day, that some recent authors write *Tartarian* as the adjective of *Tartar*; *Tartarian* is that of *Tartarus*; *Tartar* is in itself an adjective.

Tooke. I[37] will pay you down on the nail a substantive for your adjective. We say *poulterer;* we might as well say *ministerer*, *masterer*, and *maltsterer*. Our language, sir, is losing a little of its propriety every year. It becomes more trim by its espaliers; but I wish I could say its fruit is the better for the reduction of its branches. We have *anger* and *wrath* in our old language; *resentment*, *rage*, *pique*, the worse and weaker parts of the feeling, come from the French.

Johnson. You place too little reliance upon good authorities.

Tooke. Good writers are authorities for only what is good, and by no means and in no degree for what is bad; which may be found even in them.

Johnson. How then decide upon what is really bad or good?

Tooke. By exercising our ratiocination upon it, and by comparing with it other modes of expression. Many of those who are generally called good writers are afraid of writing as they speak. This is a worse than panic fear; and is the principal reason why our moderns are less rich and less easy than their predecessors. They are reluctant to mount up above the time of Dryden: not indeed a mean writer in prose or poetry, singularly terse in his moral sentences and felicitous in his allusions; but in copiousness and beauty of language no more comparable to Barrow and Taylor, and some others, than the canal in St James's Park

[37 From "I" to "maltsterer" (3 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

is comparable to the Thames. If we wish to breathe freely and largely, and to fill our innermost breasts with the spirit of our language, we must ascend higher.

Johnson. The most curious thing I know in it is, that *ever* and *never* should be synonymous. Can you account for this?

Tooke. The *mai* of the Italians, in like manner, serves both purposes. *Were you never so just* is the same in its meaning as *Were you ever so just.* The one is, *were you never in your life so just as upon this occasion*; the other, *howsoever just you were.*

Johnson. This satisfies me. I should myself have given the same solution.

Tooke. It must then, Doctor, be a clear and easy one.

Johnson (*aside*). The man's words are ambiguous, although it is plain that he is not aware of it; for nothing was ever so serene as his countenance, so unembarrassed as his manner, so polite as his whole demeanor. Can this fellow now be in his heart almost a republican? Impossible!

Tooke. We[38] have another odd expression in the verb *help*, when we say, "*I cannot help thinking*," for, "I cannot *but* think." We *help* in assisting and resisting. It is an exercise of power. Here the power is on the side of resistance. Again to the spelling-book: *Rind, bind, mind, find, wind* (the verb), *kind, blind,* &c., we already have acknowledged, are better written as they were formerly, with a final *e*,—as also *child, wild, mild*,—that the sound may accord with the spelling, which should always be the case where no very powerful reason interposes its higher authority. *Ache*, why not *ake?—height*, why not *highth*, as Milton writes it? Those who polish language, like those who clean pictures, often rub away the coloring. Roughness, you will tell me, is removed by the process of the moderns: I could adduce no few instances to the contrary. Now, do you imagine that the fashionable way of writing *empress' son*, if we *could* pronounce it accordingly, would be better than *empresses?*[39] No other lan-

[38 From "We" to "spelling-book" (5 lines) added in 3rd ed. From "*mind*" to "authority" occurs in 1st ed. First and 2nd eds. read: "Heigth and neighbour should be written higth and nighbour; the former comes from high, not heigh! the latter from nigh, not neigh." From "Those" to "facienda" (57 lines) occurs in 1st ed.]

[39 In the 2nd ed. Landor spells such words as Empresses, Empressis,

guage in the world (for though the serpent could once speak he could never write) presents four *esses* in conjunction. The final *es* is more proper, more ancient, more English, than the substitute *his*, which Addison, Dryden (in "Etheridge *his* courtship"), and a crowd of inferiors, have employed. Raleigh himself, greatly more learned and eloquent than either, writes "He was advised of Asdrubal *his* approach."

Johnson. Reverting to the "*empress's son*," who would not rather say "*son of the empress*" ?

Tooke. I talk of what exists in the language, not of what is best in it; nor indeed would your alteration be preferable in all contingencies. What, for instance, think you of this ? "We have heard of the ill state of health of the son of the empress of Russia." The double genitive ought to be avoided as much as possible in all composition: it has, however, a worse effect in modern languages than in ancient. To ours the ancient termination designating it is highly advantageous. It has not only two genitives, but, let me also remark to you, it has a greater variety of sounds in it than in any other I know.

Johnson. Surely not than the Greek.

Tooke. Beyond a question; if you acknowledge that the Greeks, who have never lost their language, know how to pronounce it better than we do. Their diphthongs are almost insensibly so: we give to their *ai* and *oi* our own deep-mouthed tone, our own as exclusively as *i* in *mine*, &c.

Returning to the *s:* although we have one word of nine letters in which it occurs five times, and another of only eight in which it appears as often (*posseses* and *assesses*), yet I once from curiosity examined a hundred verses in Shakspeare and the same number in Sophocles, and found it more frequent in the latter. If I had counted the *xis*, the *zetas*, and the *psis*, which contain it, the difference would have been still greater. It is true, the Greek iambic contains more syllables than ours; but the number of letters is nearly the same in each.

indicating, as do other methods of spelling advocated in this Conversation, certain strange mispronunciations on his part. Second ed. reads: "conjunction. The final *s* hath nothing to do with what Addison and others have substituted for it, *his:* it is among our few declined cases. *Johnson.* Who would not rather," &c.]

Johnson. I am unsatisfied, after all, that the English *is*, whether joined to the word or disjoined from it, whether in full or in contraction, may not be *his*, as our grammarians have supposed.

Tooke. That it has not relation to *his* may be demonstrated by its being common to both male and female, to both singular and plural: we say not only *Edwin's book*, but *Emma's book*; and, with as little hesitation, *men's minds*. Beside,[40] the most part of old authors do not write the possessive case in *is*, but in *es*; because *e* was the general termination of substantives.

There are some words which, if we receive them, we cannot spell rightly, they have been so perverted by custom: such are *amaze*, *alarm*, a *newt*; the first of which was a *maze*, the second a *larum*, the last an *evet*. So the French *affaire*, and the Italian *affare*,—*à faire*, *a fare*; demonstrable in the latter by the earlier word, still equally in common use, *facenda*, res *facienda*. *Bower* is part of *arbour*, and *cate* is part of *delicate*.

Johnson. Is *delicate*, then, used anywhere as a substantive for *delicacy*?

Tooke. Marston in one of his plays says *princely delicates*. *Débonnaire* was formerly used in a different sense from the present. "*Il faut être simple obéissant, et débonnaire, pour être propre à recevoir religion*," says Charron, a writer scarcely less shrewd than Bacon, and much more elegant. But I have traced the old gentleman pretty often out of Seneca into Plutarch.

Johnson. I do not much read French: that language appears to have been greatly changed in one century.

Tooke. Even since Pascal, Ménage, and Mad. de Sévigné. Formerly to teach Greek was *montrer le Grec*: it would have been thought an Italianism to say *enseigner*. This is remarkable in the French, that it is more figurative in common conversation than in ordinary prose writing, and more so in prose than in verse. A *batterie de cuisine*, a *chapeau abimé*, an artificial flower *magnifique*, a false curl *superbe*, a kidney bean ill-boiled *horrible*, an old fashioned coat *affreux*; a turbot with a wrong sausce an *assassination*.

We[41] see written *mantua*-maker, for *manteau*-maker,—a vulgar

[40] From "Beside" to "substantives" (3 lines) added in 3rd ed.]
[41] From "we" to "undergone" (9 lines) occurs in 1st ed.]

and ludicrous error; we see also *ameliorate* for *meliorate*, although one would reasonably suppose that it signified the reverse. We write *posthumous*, in the silly opinion that the word is derived from *post* and *humus*; the termination in fact is nowise different from that of *maximus* and *optimus* in the Latin, although, by one of the chances common in language, it has escaped that change in the middle syllable which the others have undergone.

You would derive a good many words from the Latin which come to us from nearer relatives in the North; and there are some few which really are Latin, and you do not notice as such. What think you for instance of *hocus pocus?*

Johnson. Sir, those are exclamations of conjurers, as they call themselves.

Tooke. Well, Doctor, let us join them, and try to be conjurers ourselves a little. We know that the common people often use the aspirate unnecessarily, and as often omit the *i*; for instance, they constantly say *ingenous* for *ingenious*: *u* and *i* are not only confounded by us, as in *grum* for *grim*, &c., but were equally so by the Romans, as *lacruma* was *lacrima*.

Johnson. You mean rather with *y*.

Tooke. No, they oftener wrote it with *i*: the conceited and ignorant used *y*, only to make it appear they knew the derivation. For the same reason, among us people write *thyme* with the *h*, contrary to the manner of pronouncing it.

Johnson. Pray go on.

Tooke. The preliminaries are acceded to. *Hocus* then is *ocus*, out of use, or *ocius*: *pocus* is *pocis*.

Johnson. What is that?

Tooke. The ancient Romans, followed in this by the modern Italians, wrote *pocis* for *paupis*, *Clodius* for *Claudius clodite* for *plaudite*. *Ocus pocie* is *quickly! at few words!*—the conjuror's word of command, as *præsto* is.

Johnson. You pronounced *paucis* as if the *c* was *k*.

Tooke. So did the Romans, we are taught by the Greek biographers and historians. They write Latin proper names according to the pronunciation: *Kikeron* not *Siseron*, *Kaisar* not *Sæsar*; which to their ears would have been as absurd as *Sato* would have been for *Cato*.

There[42] are also some few inaccuracies whereinto our most applauded speakers and our least objectionable writers have fallen. For instance, *I had rather not go ; you had better not do it.* This error arises from ambiguity of sound,—*I'd* rather, or *I'ou'd* rather ; contractions of *would*, and pronounced more like *had.**

If I am not mistaken, is often prefatory or parenthetical to an affirmative, in our language and most others. Nothing is absurder ; for nothing is more self-evident than that a thing is this or that *if there is no mistake.* But by saying, for instance, "If I am not *much* mistaken, sir, you are Doctor Johnson," the absurdity in the stranger would be none ; for he acknowledges a *great* mistake in taking you for another, or another for you. And the same may be said of anything else on which inquiry or curiosity has been exercised.

Johnson. Sir, you mix up so much of compliment with so much of argument, that I know not how I can answer you, unless by saying that your observation on the phrase is perfectly correct, and that I believe it to be no less new.

Tooke. We[43] do many things now which we never thought of doing formerly. We *contemplate* going to a ball and dancing a fandango ; we are *installed* in a new lodging ; we *place ourselves* in communication ; we *take* tea,—this is an improvement, we used to *take* physic only ; and then we *seek* our pillow,—of all things upon earth the most easily found, although sometimes the most unwillingly. We cannot bear an *indifferent* judge, or *indifferent* law, or *indifferent* history : we think them the reverse of what they are, —in one word, bad. But no wonder : we have been moving in a *high circle*, and beyond the *sphere* of utility; so that we fancy we have been *edified* by a sermon, and mistake a cluster of colleges for what it is most remote from,—a *university.*

Johnson. It is not we alone who do that.

Tooke. Answer enough for every objection. There are older

[42 From "There" to "had" (5 lines) occurs in 1st ed.]

* "Poet who hath been building up the rhyme . . .
When he *had* better far *have* stretched his limbs
Beside a brook, in mossy forest dell."—COLERIDGE.

A similar instance has been given from Middleton :—

"A poet *had better* borrow anything except money than the thoughts of another."—*Note to* DON JUAN, C. v.

[43 From "We" to "objection" (14 lines) added in 3rd ed.]

peculiarities which require attention, and yet have not found it. You would say, *two or three times.*

Johnson. Why not.

Tooke. Because you would not say *two times.* [44]

Johnson. I should rather say *twice or thrice.* Certainly, as more elegant.

Tooke. Beside, it saves a word; no inconsiderable thing, when we find a large family of young thoughts springing up about us, and calling on us for decent clothing.

Johnson. You, who are fond enough of innovation in politics, are reluctant to admit any new improvement in our modes of composition. Doubtless you think it as elegant to close a member of a sentence, or the sentence itself, with *of, against, in, for,* as to write "with which to contend," "of which to speak," "against which to write," "in which to partake," "for which to be zealous."

Tooke. Not only as elegant, but much more. It is strictly idiomatical; it avoids an unnecessary word; and it is countenanced by the purest writers of Greece. The iambics of the tragedians (if that be anything) sometimes end with such words as επι, παρα, περι, ὑπο, ὑπερ. I would rather close a sentence thus: *there is nobody to contend with,* than, *there is nobody with whom to contend;* rather with *there is none to fight against,* than *there is none with whom to fight.*[45] Even the French formerly were not shocked at closing a sentence with *avec,* although little accordant with their language. We often hear, *the first among them.*

Johnson. Well, why not?

Tooke. Because what is *first,* or *before,* is not *among.*

Johnson. You might argue, then, that what is *before* is not *of,* and that it has ceased to be so when, in a nautical phrase, it has parted company; yet surely you do not object to the expression, "the first of them."

[44 Second ed. reads: "times; it is anidiomatical. *Johnson.* Anidiomatical! *Tooke.* We want the word; take it from me. It is not so, when *or three* comes between. *Johnson.* I should . . . elegant, besides it saves . . . . decent and warm clothing. You who are," &c.]

[45 Second ed. reads: "fight. Whenever we can avoid *whom* and *which,* we should; and above these the relative *that*—the stiff plantain of hard and uncultivated tracts in our literature. Even," &c. Three lines below, from "we" to "speech" (10 lines) occurs in 1st ed.]

Tooke. It has not ceased to be *of* by being *before;* for *of* is *off*, however we may, for obvious reasons, separate them in the parts of speech. We[46] perceive a slight shade of difference between *yet* and *still*. The most remarkable example of it was given by a great foreign linguist, who, conversing with an English prelate on many occasions and at many different times, committed but one mistake: "When this event happened I was not *still* born." *Above* and *over* are not always synonymous. We may say, *he wept over me;* we cannot say, *he wept above me*. The words *can not* remind me that those should always be separated,—a remark made by Ben Jonson, but never attended to. You are well-*read* and well-*spoken;* have you any objection to be well-*mounted*.

Johnson. Strange inversion of active and passive!

Tooke. What an outcry would be raised against you or me, if we applied a verb in the singular to several nouns!

Johnson. And justly.

Tooke. Yet elegance sometimes requires it, even in our own language. The Italian has not repudiated it: Metastasio says,—

"La mia Filli e la mia cetra
Sempre cara a me sarà:"

And Petrarca,—

"Benedetto sia il giorno e l 'mese e l'anno."

The best of the French poets and prose-writers have complied with it, and the Athenians cherished it.

Johnson. We look rather to the Latin.

Tooke. Even there, in the most common school-books, we find it. Virgil says,—

"Vocat ingenti clamore Cytheron
Taygetique canes domitorque Epidauras equorum."

[46 First ed. reads: "speech. You toss your head about, Doctor; is there fœnum in cornu? must I make my escape? or will you accept my apology for so deep an encroachment on your time and patience? *Johnson.* If your arguments were always as just . . . remark." The Conversation in the 1st ed. ends here. The 2nd ed. reads: "You toss your head . . . patience. *Johnson.* If your arguments . . . and so heartily." *See* Note 60 on last Conversation.]

The first page of Horace offers also an example:—

"Metaque fervidis
Evitata rotis palmaque nobilis
Terrarum dominos evehit ad deos."

And again,—

"Dum pudor
Imbellisque lyræ musa potens vetat."

Johnson. These are strong instances; but I would rather you adduced an authority from some great writer in prose.

Tooke. I will adduce one from the most unquestionable of all Latin grammarians, Quintilian: "Et animantium quoque sermone carentium ira, lætitia, adulatio, et oculis et quibusdam aliis corporis signis deprehenditur."

Milton writes,—

"That hill and valley rings."—B. 2. v. 496.

And in his prose, "Yet ease and leisure *was*."

We have lately seen such words as *carry out* and *open up*. Who would not think that *carry out* a measure signifies to reject it or dismiss it; whereas it is forced to say quite the contrary, *carry into* effect. To "open *up*" is no less wrong than to *examine into*: *up* is redundant, *into* is inapplicable, for to examine is to *weigh out*. But where we are pleased, improprieties pass by unnoticed. In Shakspeare we have (not of Shakspeare, however, but of the printer),—

"I never yet did hear
That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear."

As we read these verses they are nonsense. It should be *pieced* (made whole again), not *pierced* (made sensible). Being "bruised," it could not want this.

Johnson. This reading never occurred to me. Have you any more?

Tooke. Several, and quite as obvious. But let us rather walk back again to the old serviceable words we left behind.

Johnson. And now, pray, what more would you antiquate?

Tooke. Whatever is reasonable. Can it be questioned that *friend* written *frend*, as we pronounce it and as good authors wrote

it formerly, is better? If we write, as we do, *diameter* and *thermometer*, should we not also *meter?* Just now we were speaking of *who* and *which*. In the Litany, "Our father *which* art in heaven," is often read by conceited young clergymen, "*who* art."

Johnson. I would strip their gowns over their shoulders.

Tooke. To some purpose, I hope. Waller writes,—

> "Let those *which* only warble love,
> And gargle in their throat."

Johnson. In that poem, addressed to Henry Lawes, Waller's expression is more vigorous and happy than usual, especially in the following words,—

> "Make a *shrill sally* from the breast."

He wrote as elegantly as South.

Tooke. No high compliment. South was clever and dexterous. Throw out a flimsy and showy argument to him, and he will bite it to pieces from between his ruffles as a lapdog an embroidered glove. He spells many words rightly: for example, *scepter, counsils, exil, honor, public, proclame, procede, humor, sutable, onely, woolfe;* others wrongly: for example, *doe* (do), *hapned, weakned, heightned, hardned, souldier, publique, daign, supream.* He uses *act* for *actuate*,—"Petty tyrants acted by party," "acts the whole man." Then, "What course have we *took* to allure the former?" "The most effectual way to destroy religion is to embase (debase) the teachers and dispensers of it." Worst of all, "Their opinions *wholly* divided." Here the word is first badly spelled, for whole must be *wholy* or *wholely*, as *sole* is *soly* or *solely:* the adverb cannot have a double *l* if the adjective has a single one. I have before remarked this.

Johnson. Sir, I would rather you found faults in South than authority in Hume.

Tooke. Certainly the others were quite sufficient without him. I would only demonstrate by it that the practice has continued down to the present day in an unbroken line of good authors.

Johnson. I am not to be guided in my language by a Scotchman.

Tooke. Then take any of the others you prefer. Archibald Bower is a Scotchman, yet he writes with almost as much purity

as Blackstone himself. But, Doctor, why this hostility to writers who never have molested you? It seems wonderful that you should hate the nation as you do,—a nation which would have restored the prince you reverenced. If there were any worth in him of any kind whatever, it might have created a desire to see him supersede the occupant of his grandfather's throne, provided we could be sure of his maintaining the religion and liberties of the people. But since no member of that family ever had honor enough to maintain his word, or religion enough to observe his oath, your probity would surely suppress your predilection.

Johnson. Kings, good or bad, are not to be roughly handled or irreverently approached.

Tooke. If the nation looks at them for an example, and finds the example a bad one; if those nearest their persons imitate them: if the imitation goes on in exaggerated lines, until in every house and bed-chamber there is a copy of it,—the mischief is enormous, and it may continue far beyond our calculation. Never do even the best kings sympathize deeply with the sufferings of the people. Their preachers and courtiers take out the heart and entrails, put strong spices in room of them, stroke the plumage softly down, infix false eyes, and place them in glass cases out of reach.

Johnson. Out of reach! So they should be.

Tooke. Has the practice been successful in the princes you supported? or does it promise any better success in those who supersede them?

Johnson. You would have none.

Tooke. You mistake. Hereditary kings are the only safeguards for us; and theirs is the only station I wish to be hereditary. I have seen a child born to a large fortune, so carefully wrapped up, so protected from a breath of air, that his estate, when he came to possess it, was no enjoyment to him; in like manner is the seclusion of princes from the people injurious to them, infecting their moral vigor, and contracting the action of the heart. I do not blame any attachment in which pity and generosity are concerned. But if you commiserate the Stuarts, spare at least the nation which rose in arms for their defence, and whose shouts of enthusiasm you might almost have heard at Lichfield.

Johnson. I heard them nearer; but no more on that. Pre-

judices I may have; for what man is without them? but mine, sir, are not such as tend to the relaxation of morals, the throwing down of distinctions, the withholding of tribute to whom tribute is due, honor to whom honor. You and your tribe are no more favorable to liberty than I am. The chief difference is, and the difference is wide indeed, that I would give the larger part of it to the most worthy, you to the most unworthy. I would exact a becoming deference from inferiors to superiors; and I would not remove my neighbor's land-mark, swearing in open court that there never was any but an imaginary line between the two parties. Depend upon it, if the time should come when you gentlemen of the hustings have persuaded the populace that they may hoot down and trample on men of integrity and information, you yourself will lead an uncomfortable life, and they a restless and profitless one. No man is happier than he who, being in a humble station, is treated with affability and kindness by one in a higher. Do you believe that any opposition, any success, against this higher can afford the same pleasure? If you do, little have you lived among the people whose cause you patronize, little know you of their character and nature. We are happy by the interchange of kind offices, and even by the expression of good-will. Heat and animosity, contest and conflict, may sharpen the wits, although they rarely do; they never strengthen the understanding, clear the perspicacity, guide the judgment, or improve the heart.

APPENDIX A.

On p. 225, l. 7, 1st ed. reads: "One. On this ground the small critics of the *Edinburgh Review* have incalculably the advantage over us. I lay it . . . . trumpet stop. *Southey.* But, such as it is, he blows it well. *Porson.* To continue the metaphor, it seems to me, on the contrary, that a good deal of his breath is wiffed on the outside of the pipe, and goes for nothing. He wants absolutely all the four great requisites—creativeness, constructiveness, the sublime, and the pathetic—and I see no reason to believe that he is capable or even sensible of the facetious, as Cowper and you have proved yourselves to be on many occasions. *Southey.* Among the opinions we form of our faculties, this is the one in which we all are the most liable to err. How many are suspicious that they are witty who raise no such suspicion in any one else? Wit appears to require a certain degree of unsteadiness in the character. Diamonds sparkle the most brilliantly on heads stricken by the palsy. *Porson.* Yes; but it is not every palsied head that has diamonds, nor every unsteady character that has wit. I am little complimentary; I must, however, say plainly, that you have indulged in it without any detriment to your fame. But where all these higher qualities of the poet are deficient, if we cannot get wit and humour, there ought at least to be abstinence from prolixity and dilation. *Southey.* Surely it is something," etc.

On p. 236, l. 19, 1st ed. reads: "Listen then. 'The west that burns like *one* dilated *sun*. Are you ready for the sublime? Come on. 'Where in a mighty *crucible* expire The mountains!' It must now be all over with them if they expired. The self-same verse, however, continues to inform us, that, after this operation, they were—What think you? 'Glowing hot.' *Southey.* Coals of fire are generally on the outside of crucibles. The melting of the mountains is taken from the Holy Scriptures. *Porson.* And never was there such a piece of sacrilege. Away he runs with them, and passes them (as thieves usually do) into the crucible. Here follows," etc.

On p. 240, l. 15, 1st ed. reads: "perusal. *Porson.* After a long preamble yon recorder saith,

"'Tis known that twenty years are past since she." Nobody has been mentioned yet, but you shall soon hear who *she* is—

> '(Her name is Martha Ray)
> Gave with a maiden's true good will
> Her company to Stephen Hill,

And she was blithe and gay,
While friends and kindred all approved
Of him whom tenderly she loved;
And they had fixed their wedding day.'

Now fifty pounds reward to whosoever shall discover, in any volume of poems, ancient or modern, eight consecutive verses so sedulously purified from all saline particles. *Southey.* I would not be the claimant. *Porson.* And pray, Mr Southey, can you imagine what day of the week that wedding day was? *Southey.* I wonder he neglected to specify it. In general he is quite satisfactory on all such dates. *Porson.* Neither can I ascertain the exact day of the week, entirely through his unusual inadvertence. But the wedding day, sure enough, began with, 'The morning that must wed them both.' Odd enough that a wedding should unite *two* persons! I believe, on recollection, that in the country parts of England such a result of such a ceremony is by no means uncommon. Here in London it is apt to embrace, in due course of time, another or more. *Southey.* A great deal of bad poetry does not of necessity make a bad poet; but a little of what is excellent on a befitting subject constitutes a good one. *Porson.* If ever this poet before us should write a *large* poem (a *great* poem is out of the question), he will stick small particles of friable earth together, and hang the conglutinated nodules under a thatched roof, the more picturesque and the more interesting (no doubt) for its procumbent elevation.

'Strange *fits of passion* have I known;
And I will dare to tell,
But in the lover's ear alone,
What once *to me befell.*'

He has never told lover, or any other man, anything like a *fit of passion.* I wish he could do that.

'In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon.'

What originality of thought, and what distinctness of expression.

'My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised ——'

What a horse! Did ever another do the like? And never stopped! A wandering Jew of horse flesh. There's a horse for you! Could any Yorkshire jockey promise more?

'What fond and wayward thought will *slide*
Into a lover's head!'

Really, are you aware of that, Mr Southey? But if they must *slide* anywhere, they can nowhere find a piece of harder ice to slide upon. *Southey.* Certainly there is not much warmth or much invention in several of the Lyrical Ballads. This species of poetry can do without

them. *Porson.* Then we can do without this species of poetry. But invention here is; you have never looked deep enough for it. Invention here is, I say again, and a sufficiency for a royal patent. What other man living has produced such a quantity of soup out of bare bones, however unsatisfactory may be the savour? 'O mercy! to myself I cried.' We sometimes say to ourselves, but seldom *cry* to ourselves in moments of reflection. 'If Lucy should be dead.' *Southey.* Surely this is very natural. *Porson.* Do not force me to quote Voltaire on the *natural*, and to show you what he called it. If the presentiment had been followed up by the event, the poem, however tedious, had been less bald. In how different a manner has Mad. de Staël treated this very thought, which many others have also entertained! Do me the favour to take down *corrine.* Excuse my pronunciation. 'Comme je tournais nes regards vers le ciel pour l' en remercier, je ne sçais par quel hazard une superstition de mon aufance s'est ranimée dans mon cœur. *La lune que je contemplais s'est couvert d'un nuage et l'aspect de ce nuage etait funeste.*' At the close of the last volume (give it me) we find the consequence. 'Elle voulut lui parler, et n'en eut pas la force. Elle leva ses regards vers le ciel, et vit la lune qui se couvert du mème nuage qu' elle avait fait remarquer à Lord Melvil, quand ils s'arretèrent sur le bord de la mer an allant à Naples. Alors elle lui montra de sa main mourante, et sou dernier soupir fit retomber cette main.' Here you have the poetical; you had before the prose version of the same description. *Southey.* It is difficult to treat those subjects much better in the *ballad.* *Porson.* Why then choose them? I will, however, prove to you that it is no such a difficult matter to treat them much better, and with a very small stock of poetry. *Southey.* I am anxious to see the experiment, especially if you yourself make it. *Porson.* I have written the characters so minute, according to my custom, that I cannot make them out distinctly in the enclosure of the green curtains. Take up yon paper from under the castor oil bottle; yes that—now read.

Southey reads.

I.

"Hetty, old Dinah Mitchell's daughter,
Had left the side of Derwentwater
About the end of Summer.
I went to see her at her cot,
Her and her mother, who were not
Expecting a new comer.

II.

"They both were standing at one tub,
You might have heard their knuckles rub
The hempen sheet they washed.
The mother suddenly turned round,
The daughter cast upon the ground
Her eyes like one abashed.

III.

"Now, of this Hetty there is told
A tale to move both young and old,
A true pathetic story;
'Tis well it happened in my time,
For much, I fear, no other rhyme
Than mine could spread her glory.

IV.

"The rains had fallen for three weeks,
The roads were looking like beefsteaks
Gashed deep to make them tender;
Only along the ruts you might
See little pebbles black and white,
Walking, you'd think—must end here.

V.

"Hetty, whom many a loving thought
Incited, did not care a groat
About the mire and wet.
She went upstairs, unlocked the chest,
Slipped her clean shift on, not her best;
A prudent girl was Het.

VI.

"Both stockings gartered, she drew down
Her petticoat and then her gown,
And next she clapped her hat on.
A sudden dread came o'er her mind,
Good gracious now, if I should find
No string to tie my patten!"

Porson. Come, come, do not throw the paper down so disdainfully. I am waiting to hear you exclaim, "Sume superbiam quæsitam meritis." Ah, you poets are like the curs of Constantinople. They all have their own quarters, and drive away or worry to death every intruder. The mangier they are the fiercer are they. Never did I believe until now that any poet was too great for your praise. Well, what do you think, for we of the brotherhood are impatient to hear all about it? Zealous creature! *Southey.* Really, I find no cause for triumph. *Porson.* Nor do I, but my merriment," etc.

On p. 242, l. 1, 1st ed. reads: "space. What do you think now of this? 'An ethereal purity of sentiment which could only emanate from the soul of a woman.'* *Porson.* Such criticism is, indeed, pure oil

* *Edinburgh Review* on the Poems of Felicia Hemans.

from the *Minerva Press*. *Southey*. No, indeed; it is train oil, imported neat from Jeffrey's. *Porson*. Where will you find, in all his criticisms one striking truth, one vigorous thought, one vivid witticism, or even one felicitous expression? Yet his noxious gas is convertible to more uses than Hallam's caput mortuum that lies under it. *Southey*. Better is it that my fellow-townsman should 'plod his weary way' in the Heart of Midlothian, than interline with a sputtering pen the fine writing of Sismondi. *Porson*. If these fellows knew anything about antiquity, I would remind them that the Roman soldier on his march carried not only vinegar, but lard, and that the vinegar was made wholesome by temperate use and proportionate dilution."

END OF VOLUME III.

TURNBULL AND SPEARS, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH